

Creative Capital

State Research Project

Findings for Arizona and Maine
September 2007

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Analysis and Comparison of Arizona and Maine in a National Context
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The State Research Project is an initiative of Creative Capital executed under the leadership of Ruby Lerner, Executive Director, and Celia O'Donnell, Director of External Affairs.

Creative Capital, a New York City-based nonprofit organization, acts as a catalyst for the development of adventurous and imaginative ideas by supporting artists who pursue innovation in form and/or content in the performing and visual arts, film and video, emerging fields and innovative literature. We are committed to working in partnership with the artists whom we fund, providing advisory services and professional development assistance along with multi-faceted financial aid and promotional support throughout the life of each Creative Capital project.

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Introduction to the State Research Project

Since its launch in 1999, Creative Capital's national grantmaking program has awarded nearly \$6 million to artists pursuing fresh approaches in the visual and performing arts, film/video, emerging fields, and innovative literature. Financial awards are only one aspect of Creative Capital's distinctive approach to supporting its grantees, who further benefit from a range of services designed to help them implement and promote their projects as well as develop professionally. Partnering with individual artists in a deep, integrated way over the course of several years, the organization fosters experimentation and sustains groundbreaking work in the face of dwindling support in other sectors and a cultural climate widely characterized as inhospitable to innovation. With a focus on artists who are not only rigorous in their commitment to their craft but who are also articulate about their work and conscious of their position in the professional landscape, resources are allocated where they are most likely to produce catalytic growth and outstanding results. By combining funding and services, Creative Capital maximizes the impact of both.

From the beginning, even as it was building a successful model of support that would reach more than 1,000 artists in its first five years, Creative Capital continually returned to the question of how it might expand its reach to an even greater number of artists and communities. The foundation's board and executive director Ruby Lerner were familiar with the National Endowment for the Arts Artists' Projects Regional Initiative (APRI), a public-private partnership formed to address the fact that most NEA grantees came from only two states, New York and California. The APRI successfully promoted cultural and geographic diversity in the NEA by distributing money through regional arts organizations to promising local artists—until budgetary sanctions from the Senate required the NEA to withdraw its support of the program in 1994. Could a similar initiative help maximize the reach of Creative Capital's model? Might working on the regional level provide an extra layer of support and momentum within communities where there is already an active community of creative artists?

CREATIVE CAPITAL STATE RESEARCH PROJECT

In early 2004, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, a longtime funder of Creative Capital's core program for performing arts, provided a \$100,000 Special Project Grant to begin to explore such questions. The grant was earmarked specifically for research on applying and replicating models of support, to be conducted over the course of two years. This State Research Project (SRP) would assess the feasibility of applying the foundation's established national grantmaking and services model on a state level.

Reaching Out to the States

800 members of the arts community nationwide received a project description of the SRP in March of 2005. It outlined a mission to begin development of a plan for a state-based pilot program that would serve artists in one or more states, mirroring Creative Capital's integrated support of its core grantees and encouraging asset-based thinking among and about artists. The precise form this national-state partnership would take was left deliberately undefined; the results of the SRP would guide the partners in establishing the most effective means of supporting artists in different regions according to their unique needs.

Initial response to the project was strong and exciting: Artist-centered organizations in thirty-eight states asked to receive the Request for Proposals (RFP). (New York and California were excluded from the running, as these two states consistently represent the largest number of Creative Capital applicants and grantees.) The RFP allowed for one proposal per state, encouraging multiple interested entities within each state to work together to apply for the project. From the outset, Creative Capital was committed to making this work collaborative, not only between the national organization and the states, but within each state as well. With the open call for proposals and competitive selection process, the hope was to elicit genuine buy-in from states that were at a truly catalytic moment for change.

Why Arizona and Maine?

In June of 2005, seventeen organizations submitted proposals on behalf of their states, and in October of that year, a team of five artists and arts professionals came together to evaluate potential state partners. Applicants ranged from state organizations that were already doing an outstanding job of listening to and working with their artists to organizations in states where artists really were struggling to gain a footing. As the selection process continued, Arizona and Maine surfaced as strong contenders because they fell in between those two extremes. Here were two states at a catalytic moment, where individual artists were entering the conversation about support for the arts in new ways.

In Arizona, the Partnership for Innovation, a statewide consortium of arts and policy leaders with the Arizona Commission on the Arts as lead partner, formed in direct and enthusiastic response to Creative Capital's RFP. The Partnership made a compelling case for their state as uniquely poised to benefit from the sort of intervention Creative Capital was proposing: "Arizona is the second fastest-growing state, witnessing intense development and unprecedented cultural and ethnic expansion." Four vibrant urban centers—Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma—offer a wealth of nationally recognized art collectives, dance studios, and interdisciplinary presenting organizations, while in rural communities, artists continue to work in both traditional and nontraditional forms. With the rapid growth of Phoenix in particular, artists are eager to make their voices heard in discussions of urban development and urban design.

Because New England has a higher concentration of creative workers than other parts of the country, Maine sees the arts and culture as central parts of community life, critical to attracting new workers and to keeping young people in its cities and towns. The state has for some time been researching and promoting a Creative Economy Initiative, devoted to cultivating and supporting its creative workers, and artists are a vital element in this project. In its application to the SRP, the Maine Arts Commission emphasized "respect for artists/visionaries" and support for "work that is challenging, intelligent, diverse and exploratory" as crucial to establishing Maine as "a haven for creativity." Existing initiatives in the state have concentrated on developing live/work spaces for artists, forging

connections among far-flung and isolated members of the arts community, and securing free and low-cost healthcare.

In their proposals, both states demonstrated an existing momentum that Creative Capital felt confident it could plug into and intensify. And both partner organizations made it clear that important conversations about the future of their states had reached the point where the presence of a national organization could provide the very leverage required to insert individual artists and artists' issues securely within those conversations.

A Collaborative Process

Creative Capital firmly believes that artists' issues deserve their own line of research, so in hiring consultants to travel to the states and conduct interviews and focus groups with artists and administrators there, they sought out researchers who had experience in projects focusing not just upon the arts, but specifically upon individual artists. A collaborative team was assembled for each state—Eric Wallner and Roberto Bedoya in Arizona, Kathie deNobriga and Barbara Schaffer Bacon in Maine. In addition, the team of Caron Atlas and Helen Brunner was contracted to analyze and compare the findings of the two reports once they were completed. Many of these consultants had worked on the seminal Urban Institute study *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists*, and all of them had at some point in their careers worked for artist-centered organizations. They were uniquely suited to understanding the issues facing artists around the country as well as Creative Capital's service-oriented approach to supporting its grantees.

With two consultants in each state, the reports benefited from a combination of sensibilities involved in asking the questions and shaping the findings. At every step of the way, the partner organizations within the states participated actively in the process. Questions to be put to individual interviewees and groups were developed by the consultants in cooperation with both Creative Capital and the partner agencies. At the same time, the consultant teams in each state were given the freedom to individualize their questions and approaches

according to their particular research styles and the distinct situations they discovered in Arizona and Maine. As it happened, the consultants on the Maine project focused more on group meetings, while the Arizona consultants were able to conduct more one-on-one interviews because the Arizona Commission on the Arts raised additional research funds from the Arizona Community Foundation.

From Creative Capital, executive director Ruby Lerner and director of organizational resources and state-based programming Celia O'Donnell traveled to both states. Lerner met with community and corporate foundations as well as individual philanthropists—not actively fundraising at this early stage, but cultivating relationships with potential key stakeholders and listening to what they had to say. O'Donnell focused on site visits to artist-centered organizations and meetings with individual artists. Both were impressed and inspired by the work being done in the states and were able to observe for themselves some of the issues that would emerge as central in the two reports. In Arizona, for instance, they were pleased to discover the degree to which Creative Capital was already well known among artists. The foundation's highly competitive application process for potential grantees clearly had helped artists to identify the need to foster a more robust critical discourse around arts in the state—a need that comes up repeatedly in the Arizona report. In Maine, the sheer distances traveled to get from one artist's studio to another were eye-opening for visitors from the heart of New York City, making palpable the sense of geographic isolation pointed to again and again by rural artists in the Maine report.

An Evolving Understanding

Going into the SRP, Creative Capital did some research into various potential models for the partnership that might eventually emerge with one or more states: a satellite office model versus a franchise model, for example, versus an arrangement truly centralized under the control of the national organization. Should Creative Capital install intact its method of working with artists, spearheading a state pilot program that would offer grants to individual artists, provide professional development

opportunities, and handle project promotion in the very same way it does for its national grantees? How would such a model be best administered? Its feasibility would rely largely on sources of funding that had not yet been identified. Much would depend upon whether funding for the pilot program was local or national; it was impossible, at this early stage, to be too specific in envisioning the next step beyond the SRP. But the absence of funding also meant freedom from constraints. The research could be allowed to be just that: open-ended, open-minded, inquisitive, and fully responsive to the distinct issues and situations the consultants discovered in each state.

This open-ended process allowed all sorts of unexpected things to come to the surface—including issues and needs that Creative Capital does not address through its programming. The researchers discovered a host of fascinating opportunities and challenges—for example, the dearth of critical discourse in Arizona—that Creative Capital simply is not set up to address. Other findings point to national trends that are playing out on a local level (and these are discussed further in the analysis provided by Caron Atlas and Helen Brunner in the next section of this package). The reports that follow here are achievements in themselves, providing valuable synthesis of and insight into issues confronting artists and arts organizations in the states of Arizona and Maine.

Based on the findings and analysis provided by the consultants as well as the opinions and stories generously shared by the many artists and organizations interviewed, it has become clear that local ownership will be key to any sort of sustainable initiative to support individual artists and build out infrastructure in each of the states. Creative Capital has come to see its own best possible role going forward as that of coach, paralleling its relationship with its artist grantees. With a national vantage point and extensive experience supporting artists, Creative Capital is ideally suited to provide motivation, education and strategy development for different states as they hammer out their own approaches to nurturing innovative work.

Mission Fulfilled

Already, Creative Capital has demonstrated its capacity to

act as laboratory, model, facilitator, catalyst and convener. Representatives from Arizona's and Maine's arts commissions attended Creative Capital's Artists' Retreat in the summer of 2006, and a Creative Capital professional development workshop ran in Arizona in December of 2006. Representatives from the commissions have already reached out to Creative Capital for help with strategizing approaches to potential funders. Eventually a meeting in New York will introduce representatives from the state arts commissions to members of the national funding community. Above all, by taking an interest in artists in these states, Creative Capital has helped to reframe statewide discussions around how best to support the arts. According to Governor John E. Baldacci of Maine, "Supporting individual artists is a priority, as one piece of our strategy to build on Maine's strengths. But we must do more, and welcome the new partnership with Creative Capital."

One very encouraging outcome of the SRP is the degree to which it reveals how the presence and attention of a highly regarded, national organization like Creative Capital can not only leverage support from powerful local figures but also profoundly revitalize conversations around artists' issues on a regional level. Claire West, performing arts director of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, explains, "Creative Capital lent unquestionable credibility, and that, matched with the Commission's credibility, led people to pay attention." Donna McNeil, assistant director of the Maine Arts Commission, adds, "I believe [Creative Capital] prompted Representatives Glenn Cummings and David Webster to attend the meetings and hear a new (artist) voice. Their presence also alerted the foundation world to the need for artist support and opened a conversation around that need. But most of all the SRP helped us to look at ourselves. Maine is a state where we all pretty much know each other anyway, but Creative Capital brought focus to individual artists and gave the artists themselves a sense of credibility and visibility."

Creative Capital State Research Project

**Analysis and Comparison of Findings
for Arizona and Maine in a National
Context**

[EXCERPT]

Prepared by Caron Atlas and Helen Brunner

September 2006

As part of the process of determining the feasibility of a state-based program of support for individual artists, Creative Capital contracted with Caron Atlas and Helen Brunner to analyze the opportunities and challenges that Creative Capital might encounter in working with the states of Arizona and Maine. What follows is an excerpt from their report to Creative Capital that focuses on national context and open questions. It is included here to provide the reader with a wider view of issues in Arizona and Maine that are prevalent in other parts of the country and across the national cultural scene.

National Context

While different in size and degree of diversity, both Arizona and Maine reflect the increasingly fluid populations and shifting demographics that are characteristic of our dynamically changing country. These changes challenge conventional art support systems to draw on past experience and to anticipate the future. This includes considering new kinds of organizations, networks and collaborations, as well as rethinking definitions of art, culture, aesthetics and disciplinary distinctions. It also means reexamining standards of quality and validation inside and outside the art world. Community and place need to be understood in new ways, as people carry their geographic and cultural identities with them from one place to another or develop multi-centered identities. All of this has an impact on funding categories and criteria, the scope of arts grantmaking and the kinds of services that can best serve the field.

Most of the issues raised in the state assessments are not unique to Arizona or Maine. Artists note the need for affordable space in the face of gentrification and development, as well as concerns about affordable health insurance, informed criticism, practical training opportunities for young artists and ongoing artistic development. These issues reflect those facing artists interviewed as part of the Urban Institute's *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists*, which included nine cities nationwide and a rural composite. Calls for national funders to identify and support artists working off the coasts and for colleges and universities to connect with the larger arts community further echo the Urban Institute study.

Defining innovation is challenging. Funding categories often reflect a narrower definition than those used by artists or communities. In Arizona and Maine, as in many other places, artists define innovation broadly, as relating to content, context and manner of working in addition to formal explorations. Innovation may involve working outside of formal institutions and systems, cross-fertilization between disciplines or collaborations outside of the arts.

The prevalence of do-it-yourself (DIY) approaches and limited liability corporations (LLCs) in Arizona and Maine reflects an entrepreneurial ethos in the states that is also a national phenomenon. These efforts are more commercial in orientation but artist-centered in spirit. Artists have experienced great success in making their own opportunities but also can feel frustration when they reach a career plateau. They report few opportunities to move into the mainstream art world and a lack of alternative infrastructures to help them take their work to the next level.

Artists of color and those who work in community-based settings may be served by "parallel systems" not deeply connected to state infrastructures. Shifting demographics require new approaches to identifying and supporting immigrant artists. Increasingly, cultural intermediaries—community centers, culturally specific organizations and networks, individuals and organizations straddling multiple worlds—are helping to expand the ecology. It is risky when only one group plays this role, as opposed to a diversity of entities that can create a supportive infrastructure or network.

The challenges faced by performing artists in Arizona and Maine regarding financial support, rehearsal/performance space and opportunities to tour reflect national trends. But other areas and disciplines buck national trends—for example, Tucson, Arizona's thriving media arts community, includes an active Association of Independent Video and Film (AIVF) salon. Across the nation, the infrastructure for media is experiencing a funding crisis, and the national AIVF has closed its doors.

Reflecting the experience of many artists nationally, artists in Arizona and Maine participate in both formal

and informal networks, with informal ones at least as useful as formal ones. They reflect a comfort level with being “multi-centered” and embracing the fluidity and cross-fertilization that comes from leaving and returning to the state. Arizona artists draw a distinction between that positive type of fluidity and the negative “drain” of creative talent when artists leave permanently in search of better opportunities. Respondents in Maine focus on ways in which their multi-centered lives contribute to the strength of their work and are a defining part of their identity as Maine artists.

With respect to policy, the reports reflect a national trend toward building a case and gaining support for the arts by linking them to other sectors. Percent for Arts programs are robust in both states. The pool of funds for the City of Phoenix’s Public Art Program is one of the largest in the country due to a local development boom, with approximately \$10 million available. Artists are working with other advocates to fight displacement and create more artist-friendly local ordinances, obtain subsidies for studio spaces and establish community development corporations. Maine’s Creative Economy Initiative links arts and culture with the economic health of the state and has the potential to position artists as the beneficiaries of public and private investment. The initiative has been nationally recognized and has had significant influence across the country, and though there is some concern about the way artists have been included to date, there is tremendous potential if they are involved in a substantive way in the future.

Open Questions and Concerns

Our analysis of the Arizona and Maine reports raises a series of questions that are by no means limited to these states. We share them here with the hope that they may be useful to those concerned about artist support in other places as well. These questions may be helpful in initiating discussions about how to better understand the complex and dynamic nature of art and culture and to create systems of support that reflect and further this understanding.

Inclusion

Whose voices are not regularly represented in assessments of arts support systems?

Parallel Systems

What are the systems—formal and informal—that support artists of color, rural artists, traditional artists, and immigrant and refugee artists?

Innovation Within Tradition

What are the dynamic qualities of tradition, and how is innovation defined within traditions?

DIY and Models Outside of Conventional Nonprofits

How can artists move from DIY into the mainstream art world, and is this the only pathway to success? What might be an appropriate support system to take DIY structures and informal networks to the next level within their own frames of reference? What are the benefits of both formal and informal structures, given that formalizing an informal network is not always for the best?

Communication and Collaboration Across Networks

What are examples of communication and collaboration that span parallel systems; DIY and conventional nonprofits; discipline-based networks and local, state and national networks? How might communication and collaboration be enhanced to better serve artists?

Critical Mass

Both reports point to areas in the states where particular disciplines are doing well. What are the characteristics of climates that are particularly supportive of specific disciplines?

Intermediaries

What sorts of intermediary models might incorporate the knowledge, overview and infrastructure of established organizations while granting decision-making power to those with the most at stake—namely, the artists? Which intermediaries are best able to address changing demographics and diversity? What type of support will organizations need in order to play a greater role in helping artists while continuing to sustain their core programs?

Sustainability

How can new programs avoid raising expectations that they cannot fulfill? What is the best way to create a sustainable program? Or, in the case of a short-term initiative, how can it be catalytic and build further opportunities for support?

Looking Toward the Future

Creating a climate that validates artists, risk taking and innovative work is a goal that needs to be addressed both locally and nationally. It requires deepening critical discourse, developing markets for artists' work and creating policies that encourage innovation and risk taking.

Arizona and Maine enjoy the benefit of strong state arts councils that are well positioned to take advantage of Creative Capital's interest. Both arts councils are well respected by the artists in their states, have constituency-based planning mechanisms in place and have staff and leadership who advocate for artists. Creative Capital has already played an important role in each state by initiating a process that has brought many people together who had not talked before, by enabling the state arts councils to draw policy makers and donors into the discussion and by directing wider attention to the innovative work already underway by artists in Arizona and Maine. Continuing to build on existing assets, strategic investments, and catalytic partnerships will provide increased opportunities for the artists of Arizona and Maine.

Creative Capital State Research Project

Findings for Arizona

**Researched and written by Eric Wallner
and Roberto Bedoya**

August 2006

Creative Capital State Research Project: A Letter of Introduction from the Arizona Commission on the Arts

Creative Capital staff first visited Arizona in 1999, generating genuine excitement about a new grantmaking model that countered the national trend away from individual artist support. The success of the model stimulated ongoing dialogue and prompted individuals and organizations in Arizona to develop relationships with Creative Capital. When the foundation issued its request for proposals for the State Research Project (SRP), Arizona was ripe to respond.

Several key instigators lead the charge, most notably local artist and arts leader Greg Esser. As concepts were refined, the Arizona Commission on the Arts embraced a leadership role in assembling a steering committee known as the Arizona Partnership for Innovation. The Partnership, made up of creative artists, artist-centered organizations and supporters of culture from around Arizona, quickly became the guiding force behind the Arizona project.

A survey of working conditions and support systems for innovative artists had never been conducted in Arizona. The Arizona Commission on the Arts and Creative Capital selected the research team jointly, and with the support of the Arizona Partnership for Innovation, funds were raised to deepen and broaden the research. Even with this expanded scope, there was some concern that certain voices might not be heard, but a satisfactory balance was achieved across disciplines, career levels, ethnicities and geographic locations. Preparing for the research brought into focus vast changes taking place in Arizona's metropolitan and rural areas. Rapid population growth places Arizona on the fulcrum of change. The proposal process, the galvanizing of a learning community and the research itself have been catalysts for understanding transformations and evolving needs in our arts community.

The research has illuminated many positive qualities of Arizona's cultural ecology, such as peer support and interstate networks, affordability of living and working, an environment where the natural surroundings are inspirational, high-energy areas, calm conditions for creating, healthy arts advocacy, new market potential and

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political conditions that can accelerate work. Areas for improvement include awards, services and residencies; consistent opportunities for mid-career artists; connections to services; training for artists as business people; opportunities for critical discourse; and crossover between communities.

Over the yearlong process, gatherings of the Arizona Partnership for Innovation were as electric with enthusiasm and anticipation as they were grounded by sensible ideas. They enabled people to work together who had not previously done so, strengthened relationships with the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and allowed new ideas to emerge. Having Creative Capital's Ruby Lerner and Celia O'Donnell visit Arizona and interact with key players enhanced the project and the attention it received from community leaders and the press. The SRP's high profile around the state had much to do with the established credibility of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, but the project would not have sparked the same interest had Creative Capital not been the driving partner.

The findings have already led to discussions about strengthening existing programs within the state rather than creating or importing new models, though new funding strategies and support organizations are still possibilities. Forming relationships with artist-centered organizations nationally and internationally is another likely outcome. The research was structured so that individual arts organizations could apply the findings to their own programming and future work. With the launch of the Arizona-based report, the next stage begins.

Finally, Creative Capital's skills-building workshops, held in Arizona in December 2006, would not have been possible without the State Research Project and the opportunities, the funding and the groundwork for participation it made possible. The Partnership for Innovation and the Arizona Commission on the Arts remain enthusiastic that our work with Creative Capital will continue into the future.

Claire West,
Former Performing Arts Director
Arizona Commission on the Arts

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Creative Capital's selection of Arizona was based on many factors, including the state's active artist community and the work of a statewide coalition of arts administrators, artists and funders known as the Arizona Partnership for Innovation. Since the research began, the Arizona Partnership for Innovation, has been successful in securing additional funding from the Arizona Community Foundation to broaden and deepen the scope of the report.

This study was conducted using qualitative, ethnographic research methods—primarily in-person, one-on-one interviews, but also phone interviews and focus groups. Findings are therefore geared toward describing attitudes, opinions and subjective data. In addition to the interviews, there was a limited review of current literature on artist systems, a quantitative assessment of formalized funding programs for artists (Appendix C) and a review of Arizona-specific websites, articles and ephemera. The narrative findings describe existing artist support systems and conditions, dividing the state into three regions: Central (including Phoenix), Southern (including Tucson), and Northern (including Flagstaff).

Interviewee selection was made with a goal of hearing from diverse respondents across a range of artistic disciplines, geographic locations across the state, ethnicity, and career stages (recognizing a general, but by no means static, correlation with age). We were also directed toward artist respondents who were “originating” artists (as opposed to “interpretive”) considered to be “pursuing innovative approaches to form and content.” (A breakdown of the total respondent pool can be found in Appendix B).

Two recent studies were particularly helpful in providing a framework for analysis, and we gratefully acknowledge their contributions: *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists* from the Urban Institute's Culture, Creativity and Communities Program, and *At the Intersection: A Programmatic Assessment of Creative Capital's Support to Artists* by Caron Atlas, Helen Brunner and Kathie deNobriga.

In general, we approached the concept of support systems for artists from an ecological, environmental

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framework, beginning with six key elements necessary in a given community in order for creative work to thrive, adapted from the *Investing in Creativity* study: validation, demand/markets, material supports, training and professional development, communities and networks and information.

This report is intended to stimulate dialogue and ultimately action around the topics addressed. While we strive to be as inclusive and thorough as possible, it should not be seen as a catalogue of every artistic activity or perspective within the state. Given the resources available, our focus is on capturing broad themes and ideas pertinent to Arizona artists.

—Eric Wallner and Roberto Bedoya

OVERVIEW OF ARIZONA

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2005, Arizona's total population was 5,939,292 (with approximately 61% white, 28% Hispanic, 5% American Indian, 3% African American, 2% Asian, and 2% Multiracial). Arizona's most populated areas include Maricopa County (61% of state population), Pima County (16%) and Coconino County (2%). With a total 2005 fiscal year budget of \$4,909,900 for the Arizona Commission on the Arts, per capita spending for the arts is roughly 83 cents.

Environmental

- Positive environmental characteristics include a strong spirit of support and generosity among artists' communities, an environment conducive to art-making and a relatively affordable cost of living and access to space.
- Rapid growth and influx of new populations is increasing demand for more diverse and sophisticated cultural forms.
- Traditional iconography and mythology of the Southwest have a strong influence on market demand, particularly in the visual arts. Creating audience understanding and awareness about new artistic forms is needed.
- Conservative political and aesthetic forces present challenges for fostering artistic innovation.
- Word of mouth and informal, peer-based networks are vital sources of information and validation for Arizona artists.
- In Phoenix, there is strong energy and attention around DIY (do-it-yourself) spaces, First Friday and artist activism generated by emerging artists around Roosevelt Street and Grand Avenue.

Infrastructure and Networks

- Service organizations and formal networks for artists appear weak or non-existent in comparison to states of similar population.
- Limited funding and venues for “mid-level” artists to show their work force many to seek opportunities outside the state.
- Arizona artists have strong, informal networks to other places outside the state (particularly California, New York, Mexico and South America), while intrastate connections appear weak.
- Universities have a huge impact on the cultural landscape: On the plus side, they provide employment and resources for artists to create their work; there is, however, a lack of ongoing training and presentation opportunities outside them.
- Training programs are not adequately addressing the need to teach artists business “survival skills.”
- An overwhelming deficit of media coverage—particularly reviews and critical, scholarly discourse about artists across disciplines statewide—limits the intellectual environment for artistic growth.
- There appears to be limited communication and cross-pollination between contemporary, commercial and traditional/community-based artists’ communities.
- In lieu of formal supports, individual advocates play key roles in supporting artists.

The Challenge of Innovation

- Respondents express strong interest and support across the state for fostering innovation.
- The ambiguity of the term “innovation” is considered problematic by several respondents (particularly as a criterion for potential funding), and some definitions are broader than others.

- Respondents feel innovation in Arizona relates to subject matter, process and/or context in which the work is created.
- Support for innovative practices needs to be considered within a broad context of support for artists generally, recognizing the complex interplay of artistic practices across nonprofit, commercial and community settings.
- Respondents see an opportunity and a need to create a value for risk-taking among artists, audiences and arts organizations.

Responses to the Creative Capital Model

- The Creative Capital model of supporting innovative work is highly regarded, and the organization is seen as responsive and accessible to Arizona artists.
- Awareness of Creative Capital is highest among visual artists in urban centers.
- Creative Capital's professional development workshops are considered particularly well suited to meeting the needs of Arizona artists.
- Respondents feel that, considering Creative Capital's program as it currently exists on the national level, few Arizona artists are ready to maximize the opportunity.
- To serve the most artists, a state model would need to have different tiers of funding for different types of activities.
- At an organizational level, a state model should have an independent identity but strong local partnerships.

Opportunities

- The formation of the Arizona Partnership for Innovation is a significant advance towards developing

a latitudinal, systematic approach to artist support with specific goals, strategies and outcomes.

- The overall state environment is characterized as receptive, “ripe” for change, at the “tipping point.”
- Respondents report a sense of increased awareness, interest and capacity for addressing individual artists’ needs among funders.
- Opportunities to create synergy and meaningful partnerships with other local and national initiatives could strengthen collective action.
- New initiatives to support artists need to be flexible and responsive to accommodate the variety of styles, mediums and organizational models artists have created to support their work (such as LLCs).
- New initiatives for artists should maximize the opportunity to strengthen artists’ ability to be their own advocates and build political capital.

CULTURAL ECOLOGY

Phoenix and Central Arizona

The Phoenix metropolitan area appears poised and ready to develop into a world-class cultural destination. The city has one of the highest growth rates in the country, and its mix of cultural influences, the availability of affordable housing, spectacular climate and landscape are just a few of the assets that contribute to the region's vitality. The city's population has doubled in the last four years (from 2 million to almost 4 million), creating tremendous need for municipal infrastructure and generating new construction of all kinds.

New business development and an influx of new money are economic drivers with a potential positive impact on the development of Phoenix's creative class. AAA's new customer service center in Glendale, Google's creation of an engineering center and the boom in the biotech industry are significant examples of economic growth, which is also being fed by US Airways, Motorola and Intel. Major municipal projects underway include the airport's expansion of Terminal B and construction of a new light rail system (with accompanying public art components).

Geographic sprawl and a Southwestern ethos of respect for open space impact the arts community. The population boom creates the feeling that "Phoenix is a city of people who moved here." Residents of the Valley (as the Phoenix metropolitan area is known locally) appreciate the freedom that comes from being in a "new" city: "No one has roots here; you get to be who you want to be, no one knows your parents, you don't run into everyone you went to high school or college with here."

Whether doing yoga or hiking, boating or off-road racing, people "move here to unwind." Phoenix is also described as a "huge sports town" with "some of the best sports facilities in the country"—at times to the detriment of displaced artists.

Conservative economic and political values affect the arts in some ways. This region is favored by retirees and "families who move here so they can afford a home." One

respondent notes, "People move here to own something, not because they're worried about education or access to culture for their kids," and another adds, "[Most] people with money here buy four-wheelers and boats, not art." At the state level, there is tension between the strong, independent, female Governor who is very supportive of the arts, and a state legislature viewed as conservative and "very provincial."

The pursuit of leisure, the "Western suspicion of the intellect" and a discomfort with divergent or activist opinions can hamper creative discourse. While Phoenix may be "sheltering" and "safe," "the other side of the coin is that I can take risks because there's not a heavy critical lens" and artists are not "being bombarded by other influences." Another artist felt "there's a lot of patting on the back within the artist community" which creates "a comfort zone here that needs to be challenged."

There is a pressing need—one that exists for artists (and many others) nationwide—for affordable health care coverage. While space in which to live and work appears fairly available in Phoenix, there is great concern that rising property values and taxes will soon drive artists out. While flexible non-arts jobs, such as building management or house painting, are cited as good ways to support one's work, a vast majority of artist respondents support themselves financially through teaching at the high school or university level. Arts education and community-based residency programs are also significant, not just in terms of providing arts access to underserved populations, but also as employment opportunities for artists.

Despite perceived deficits in rigor and limited outlets for contemporary work, the visual arts scene in Phoenix seems to be robust, active and generating attention as the focal point of artist activism. A new generation of young, DIY, upstart galleries (many artist-owned) have sprouted up in the developing Grand Avenue area. Yet many artist-run galleries have come and gone in previous decades. Perhaps the most salient effect of this generational turnover of organizations is the lack of an established, mid-tier professional gallery open to experimental work, which could serve as a stepping stone for artists trying to move their careers to the next level.

A slightly more established center of artist activity and artist-friendly, locally-owned businesses focuses around Roosevelt Street. Anchored by The Eye Lounge, an artists' collective, and Modified Arts, an entrepreneurial limited liability corporation (LLC) that showcases both visual art and performance, the Roosevelt Street spaces and their leadership have been at the center of efforts to create a community of artists in Phoenix. Moving into the area at the height of its decay, artists not only fixed up the neighborhood but invested in creating infrastructure by purchasing buildings and forming the artist-run Roosevelt Row Community Development Corporation. Concerns about the gentrification of Roosevelt Street and Grand Avenue are high, with many noting that despite Phoenix's low urban density, there is a significant lack of industrial space for artists to move into.

The mass energy and appeal of First Fridays (sponsored by the all-volunteer, artist-run Artlink, Inc.) galvanize the Valley's visual arts scene. An estimated 80 to 100 galleries, stores and other businesses stay open for this event which draws an audience of approximately 7,000 to 10,000 visitors a month and has been featured by the *Los Angeles Times* and other major media outlets. Some feel that the creation of a "destination for art" and the heightened visibility for the local scene are important. Others feel it's grown too big and unruly, creating "a State Fair atmosphere around viewing" that discourages serious connoisseurs.

Although more commercially oriented than the downtown Phoenix scene, Scottsdale is famous for its high concentration of galleries, including some showcasing contemporary work such as the Bentley Gallery, Lisa Sette Gallery, G-2, and Chiaroscuro. While a few respondents complain about the overall lack of commercial galleries selling contemporary work, one gallery owner feels that technological advances like the Internet have diminished galleries' role as "gatekeeper" in a beneficial way: "Now there are many more ways for artists to get their work directly in front of an audience." The relatively recent addition of Bentley Projects (featuring a book store and restaurant) in the downtown area is an important commercial destination promoting innovative work by local artists.

One of the strongest elements of support for the visual arts throughout the Valley comes from the eight or

nine public art "percent for art" programs. The City of Phoenix's Public Art Program is not only the largest local program, but also one of the largest in the nation. The stunning growth of its pool of money (roughly \$10 million) has opened possibilities for new programming, such as an annual exhibition of temporary installation pieces featuring all local artists, and the commissioning of work by world-renowned artists—a Louise Bourgeois mirrored sculpture, for example, going into the downtown civic center. Scottsdale's program combines a curatorial approach with a public selection process for new acquisitions, and Tempe has a public/private ordinance that requires new businesses of a certain size to undertake public art projects.

Support from area museums for local visual artists is overall quite strong but also in a state of flux. The Heard Museum is a vital center and network for Native American artists, particularly for those working the edge between traditional and contemporary practices. The Arizona State University (ASU) Art Museum boasts a strong array of artist-focused programming, including their "Juice" artist networking breakfasts, and a number of major exhibitions showcasing local talent. Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMOCA) has a strong curatorial staff, but the loss of their New Directions Gallery, along with the closure of ASU's experimental gallery and the end of the Phoenix Museum of Art's Triennial, significantly reduced opportunities for local artists to exhibit innovative work.

Information regarding full-scale productions of new and innovative theater as well as community-based performance work is scarce. One respondent characterizes the theater scene in Phoenix as "anemic," and several originating theater artists note that most of their work gets mounted out-of-state (particularly in New York and Los Angeles). Performing artists of all types cite a critical need for rehearsal space.

Important incubators for innovative and emerging work include Theater In My Basement (which produces the underground "Teatro Caliente" festival focusing on "experimental trans-cultural theater works"), Paper Heart, Actors Theater and Teatro Bravo. On a larger scale, the "Beyond Broadway" series at ASU's Gammage Theater is recognized nationally for its progressively curated presenting series. The Arizona Playwrights Contest,

developed in collaboration with ASU's prestigious playwrighting program, offers a cash award and production of a new local work annually. And the Phoenix Theatre's Annual New Works Festival provides an outlet for producing work by Arizona playwrights.

Writing circles in Phoenix tend to revolve around "aesthetically like-minded people at ASU and UA [University of Arizona]" and informal writing groups around town. The recent establishment of the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at ASU is viewed as a "worthy investment" in the local writing community, and local presses like The Bilingual Review/Press support Arizona writers. Local independent booksellers continue to be important support systems for writers, although they are dwindling in number. Low barriers to entry have resulted in a glut of young writers "at the same time that more and more independent presses (both locally and nationally) are falling away." Writers working in the state's arts-in-education system feel the programs are strong but challenging for writers who aren't familiar with the state arts standards, and they call for specific training in this area. There appears to be surprisingly little support for local writers from the state library system. The Arizona Book Festival and other similar festivals are useful distribution systems for new work but are "becoming more and more standardized and losing their appeal."

A small spoken word scene appears to be developing among students and recent ASU grads. A new organization called Anthology works to "promote performance poetry and associated literary arts in the greater Phoenix community by providing opportunities for artists to perform their work and by making spoken word arts accessible to a diverse audience." Part of the indie, DIY literary scene, Desert City Death Distro is a local mail order distribution site that focuses on "providing Phoenix zinesters with a way to distribute their zines not only to the local community but to the rest of the world." Online journals with an Arizona focus include LocusPoint and Merge:POG, devoted to avant-garde poetry.

While Ballet Arizona is described as "world class," respondents feel the modern dance scene is small and struggling, though stronger than it has been in the past. The interdisciplinary program at ASU-West is viewed as one place producing some "very interesting performance works."

There appear to be very few dancers or choreographers, outside of those working at the universities, who are able to support themselves dancing full-time. As is typical in other places, most dancers here are freelance artists not associated with any one company, but rather dancing with several companies on a performance-by-performance basis. One trend is to create a "virtual company" with members from all over the country who teach in different places and come together to rehearse or present during school breaks or in the summer.

Dance touring opportunities throughout the state (both for local and outside companies) appear limited but ripe for development. Internationally-recognized choreographers Mark Morris and Pina Bausch both recently came to Phoenix with their respective companies, but respondents noted that the dance community "didn't really come out to see the work," in part because of the lack of significant residency activities such as master classes available to artists outside the university.

Rehearsal space and performance venues appear to be one of the biggest concerns for the dance community. One respondent noted that there is not a single venue for dance in downtown Phoenix. Another new to the area pointed to the need for a venue like Highways in LA or PS 122 in NYC, committed to presenting new interdisciplinary works. The absence of this kind of space also contributes to the general sense that the Phoenix dance community "lacks a focus." Other deficits include a dearth of male dancers, a shortage of critical review, an overall sense that the work being produced lacks "intellectual muscle" and the fact that "there's little support for developing pieces."

Efforts to build connections include the Arizona Commission on the Arts partnering with the Field Forward program to strengthen the choreography community. And the newly formed Arizona Dance Coalition is a potential bright spot for trying to connect dancers and coordinate dance activities statewide.

Composers largely support themselves through work at local universities and community colleges. There is a limited number of commissioning opportunities for new music within the state. Contacts for sound artists and composers center around national networks such as American Composers Forum

and Meet the Composer, and audience centers are distant places like Seattle, Boston and Chicago. Making connections to students and to the music curricula in their universities has been crucial to composers in receiving ongoing support for their outside work—gaining access to rehearsal venues, for example, and receiving internal grants from the colleges. Venues are either not interested in challenging work or else support innovation but are less-than-ideal acoustically. University of Arizona and ASU's School of Music train composers who do find work, but in other parts of the country.

Collaboration has been the central element of several recent and successful music projects. A recent multi-year residency by musician Daniel Bernard Roumain (a Creative Capital grantee) at ASU was a successful collaborative effort with local performers. Another interesting cross-disciplinary collaboration was a recent ASU exhibit entitled "Art Inspired Music," with local musicians creating music in response to art. Street performers were once undervalued, "but since First Fridays, the Downtown Phoenix Partnership has started paying performers to perform at lunchtime."

Some feel there is a resurgence of film and video work taking place in Phoenix, but several note the critical need for a professional post-production multimedia facility for independent producers outside of the university or community college systems. Media venues presenting new, innovative work include the "No Festival Required" showcases, but there are only one or two independent theaters in the Valley that show art films. The local film commission "only focuses on bringing in outside productions." One respondent says that in the 1980s, public television was strong here, but that it has become "too bureaucratic now, especially when people can just go straight to the Web."

ASU's crossdisciplinary Arts, Media and Engineering program is an important new source for training innovative artists. Encompassing 17 different disciplines across the arts and sciences, the program offers everything from an MFA to an MA in Electrical Engineering and soon will offer a PhD in digital media. Significant aspects of the program include research assistantships for all students and the opportunity to work with a range of visiting artists in

many disciplines. Facilities include a digital media center for animation and a state-of-the-art motion capture system.

Respondents speak universally about the lack of high-quality media coverage as well as a separate but equal need for arts criticism. The *Arizona Republic* is "in need of education about why the arts are important to the region"; one respondent claims that they have more than 60 writers dedicated to sports coverage and three for the arts. The local alternative weekly, the *New Times*, does some limited arts coverage, but the writing is characterized as "not informed" and often "cynical" with "little respect for new stuff." The problem is not a lack of trained local writers, but a shortage of outlets for this writing. While publications with an exclusive arts focus are lacking, there are short pieces on artists and arts activities in many magazines and e-journals with a more general "lifestyle" focus.

The Arizona Commission on the Arts is viewed favorably for efforts to support artists, as is the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture. Both a funder and the primary service organization in the state, the Commission has done "a good job of getting a seat for the arts at every table," though growth in the state's infrastructure has made this increasingly difficult. Their website is <http://www.azarts.gov>. There is some concern about their interest in supporting innovation, and some feel the Commission can be "a bit complacent" and "set in its ways."

The focus on capital campaigns among arts organizations around the city, whimsically described by one respondent as an "edifice complex," is understood to take place at the expense of investing in the local artist community. However, local bonds are underway which could finance ventures for individual artists.

The Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC) is "mostly focused on arts organizations" but galvanizes local arts support and produces important research on arts impact. A number of interviewees mention with excitement an upcoming book project, developed with MPAC's assistance by Booth-Cliborn Editions, focusing on Phoenix as a significant "Twenty-first Century City" for the arts and featuring work by local artists.

The Downtown Artists Coalition formed to fight a proposed sports arena that would displace large numbers of artists. Working in coalition with other small business owners and community leaders as part of Downtown Voices, the artists community has gained a significant voice in local politics.

Tucson and Southern Arizona

If Phoenix is marked by its rapid change, Tucson is championed for its restful, easy-going and "mellow" attitude. As one respondent explains, "Tucson is the Madison or Austin of Arizona." Acknowledged by many to have once been the focal point of artistic activity in the state, Tucson continues to be a hospitable and productive environment for artists. Artists in Tucson speak at great length about how conducive the area is to making new work and the strong support they receive from other artists.

Many point to the lack of pretension: "People don't care about where you've been. You check your ego at the door when you move here, [it's] very refreshing." An older respondent describes the city's evolution: "Tucson was a wild place in the '70s and a little less liberal now. Things toned down in the '80s, but now there's a resurgence of creative thinking." The Southwest renegade spirit is a clear draw—"all the black sheep come here"—but a contradiction remains between the "huge camaraderie" among artists and "a state full of loners and mavericks, which can make it harder to feel a sense of community."

As a location for artists, "[it] really allows you to make art with few distractions. It's an easy place to live because you don't have to spend all your time and energy just surviving." The vastness of the land and the quality of space and light are important elements for contemplation: "The land's like a clean open canvas to work with. It's a place to listen to one's inner voice." The downside of this relaxed pace is a lack of impetus to create. According to one artist, "Individual energy is important; there's not a lot of institutional back-up." Another respondent put it even more bluntly: "People in Arizona are suspicious of anyone with ambition."

In the past (late '80s, early '90s), there was significant activity around creating a downtown arts district, but then "the City got involved, it got too big,

and the Tucson Arts District Partnership lost steam." During this time, however, some important artist-run venues were created, including Dinnerware (one of the first, founded in 1980), Central Arts Collective, Toole Shed Studios and HazMat (the forerunner of the current Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson). During this period, Shane House Apartments were renovated into artists' living spaces, work spaces were created on Toole Street and an artist couple opened The Grill, a 24 hr. restaurant, artist hang-out and meeting place. Many of these spaces have more recently been "pushed out of downtown" due to rising costs, forced to relocate to the Warehouse District several blocks away.

Space is considered to be a real problem, though nowhere near the crisis levels reached in other U.S. cities. An old railroad town, Tucson (unlike Phoenix) has a lot of warehouses and industrial spaces owned by the state and the city. There is a long-standing history of local artists using these spaces, but not without complications. Many of the buildings contain leftover industrial waste, and the costs of pollution remediation are high. Artists have also had trouble getting the city to zone them as live/work spaces, and currently many are occupied illegally as such. "It's a typical story," says one administrator. "Artists come in, make something useful and beautiful, and then it's taken away." Most of these spaces are rented on a month-to-month basis, but efforts are underway for artists to purchase these buildings.

Rio Nuevo, the local community development corporation, has generated considerable planning activity and publicity. Their series of master plans for downtown invoke both hope and skepticism. As one artist surmises, "Lots of money is being thrown around, but it's not really about art . . . they're trying to bring people back to downtown by building expensive condos." A rejuvenated Tucson Arts District Partnership and the Tucson Downtown Development Group, a civic organization of downtown property owners focused on creating services, are two other important partners in redeveloping downtown.

There is a severe need for rehearsal space among dance and performing groups, due in part to the closure of Muse and, more recently, Ortospace. Local advocate Karen Falkenstrom is leading efforts to purchase an industrial space for this purpose. In Tucson, many spaces function "as

multidisciplinary spaces because of the overall lack of venues."

The loss of alternative spaces and artist collectives has left holes in the visual arts landscape. But two remaining spaces, Dinnerware Contemporary Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), continue to embrace new, experimental forms. They also provide residency opportunities for local and national artists, addressing the crucial need for professional "mid-tier" environments for artists to show their work. Of the commercial galleries, Etherton Gallery, Platform Gallery and Conrad Wile are well regarded as supporters of local contemporary artists. Raices Taller 222 is an important new gallery serving Latino artists, and the Center for Creative Photography is an "incredible local resource." The Central Tucson Gallery Association (CTGA) holds regular meetings with twelve local galleries (both commercial and nonprofit) and the Museum, to focus on joint marketing initiatives such as Art Walk, which happens three times a year. Linda Vista Ranch is an interesting effort by a former UA professor to integrate the arts into a smaller, neighboring community.

The Tucson Museum of Art (TMA) supports local artists through their Arizona Biennial, a craft fair and a gift store in which local artists sell work on consignment. While the TMA has a track record of buying local work, including some "innovative" video, there appears to be an institutional tension between supporting contemporary artists and sustaining more traditional cowboy art. At one point the museum was building a strong regional collection of work by Latino artists, but, with recent changes in staff, it isn't clear whether this will continue.

Interviewees repeatedly speak to the need for a stronger market for visual art, with comments like "Patrons are few and far between," "Buyers don't buy local work," and "People here are very frugal-liberal, but not with their spending." Many see the root problem as a statewide mindset that "if it's from here, it can't be that good." There is more interest in blue-chip work with investment value, or in traditional, tourist-driven art.

Performing artists in Tucson rely on out-of-state venues to produce and tour their work. One local playwright's professional network, including an agent, professional

peers and friends, revolves almost exclusively around New York City. He has not produced work in Tucson since 1995, because "most people making challenging work here are hiding out, working in solitude. There's nothing in place to develop new work."

As in other parts of the state, media coverage for the arts, and the performing arts in particular, is sorely lacking. The two major daily papers that used to cover dance, theater and visual arts every week now won't cover dance at all, and the alternative weekly recently cut their full-time arts writers, only to hire them back as part-time freelancers without benefits.

Tucson is home to a strong independent and "alt.country" music scene, much of which centers around Hotel Congress and the Rialto Theater. Michael Toubassi's new feature-length documentary, *High and Dry*, about Tucson's fertile punk and alternative rock music scene from 1980 to 1999, recently premiered here. Hotel Congress is a long-standing, important institution with strong ties to the artist community, not just as a venue for live music, readings, poetry slams, etc., but also as a convening point for artists.

Tucson's dance scene is healthy and active due to interesting work by companies such as O-T-O, New Articulations, La Latina Dance Project, Zuzi, and Funhouse Movement Theater. Ballet Tucson's academy and the dance department at University of Arizona have built solid reputations for their dancer training, and many of their students go on to work in companies around the country. One respondent feels that the "dance energy that was very active a decade ago has gotten lost" and points to the lack of discussion among dancers statewide. On a positive note, she sees the annual Arizona showcase conference as an important place for hearing about what's going on elsewhere. Within the region, Yuma fosters a healthy dance community with lots of budding choreographers.

Tucson has a strong literary community, particularly for poets, due in part to the presence of several literary presses, such as Kore and Chax Press, as well as the nationally-recognized Poetry Center at UA, noted for having one of the largest poetry archives in the world, and the Society of Southwest Authors (located in Prescott but mentioned as a resource by writers here). Local writers

feel that "poets have a good community here but fiction writers don't." Challenges include the lack of serious critical review, "a sense of complacency" and the scarcity of opportunities for working writers not affiliated with the universities to get teaching experience. One writer explains, "First books often are the result of national contests. You spend four years writing it and then have one chance among 400 other writers." Many younger writers distribute their work online and through CDs, bypassing traditional publication altogether. One treasured asset in Tucson's literary landscape is *Spork* magazine, a 200-page literary journal published twice a year by local poet Richard Siken.

On the media front, Tucson is home to Access Tucson, one of the first public access television stations in the nation, and several other organizations that provide resources to media artists. These include Pan Left Productions, an activist collective; Plug, a women's video art/activist collective; the Arizona Media Arts Center, which produces a local film festival; and the Loft/Tucson Cinema Society, an art-house cinema. The local chapter of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is "active and getting work done." The Hanson Film Institute at University of Arizona offers a variety of resources for individual filmmakers, including funding and professional development. The local chapter of the National Association of Latino Producers (NALIP) offers a Producer's Academy that allows filmmakers to shoot parts of their scripts.

Efforts are underway to produce a directory of all local media events and organizations, in the hope of encouraging collaboration among the various groups. Because filmmaking is such an expensive medium to work in, funding continues to be a challenge for many local producers. Respondents connect the absence of innovative media practices such as video installation to the lack of training in these forms at the universities and limited exposure in general. Much of the local training and professional development is geared toward feeding filmmakers into the Hollywood film industry. With a lack of commercial production work locally, this often means leaving the area to pursue opportunities.

Across all disciplines, artists are finding new and exciting ways to connect to audiences and one another via the Internet. Several respondents mention the creation of

websites as important marketing tools. Many also have blogs and/or profiles on social network sites such as myspace.com and Friendster, which are becoming increasingly common and effective forms of "guerilla marketing" and professional/social networks nationwide. This is particularly important to artists working at the edges of their disciplines: "If you [can't] get support locally, you look outside for others like you."

Beyond artists' frustrations at the limited marketplace, the general public in Tucson seems to value the arts and see artists as part of a vital cultural mix: "In New York City, you tell people you're a poet and their response is 'Poet? You mean waiter?' In Tucson, when you're introduced as a poet, people get happy, they want to know how you work . . . It seems to be valid and important here."

Respondents speak favorably about past support from the Tucson/Pima Arts Council (T/PAC), but more recently, cuts in funding to individual artists, perceived favoritism in the allocation of public art commissions, internal politics and leadership transitions have contributed to a vague sense of distrust. Nevertheless, several respondents are hopeful about the addition of artists advocates like David Aguirre to the T/PAC board.

The new City Council is notably pro-arts and has formed a three-member subcommittee on Arts and Culture. The City has purchased a building on the South Side to create a cultural center and has approached the Community Foundation to get involved, though the project has been somewhat delayed by changes at T/PAC.

The Arizona Commission on the Arts "does well at uniting and mapping the state and allows the arts community to see the pathways." While many respondents lament the loss of the Commission's fellowships (and National Endowment for the Arts fellowships as well) and complain about the lifetime cap on project support grants, agency staff are seen as helpful and responsive.

While there are few private foundations in the area, the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona does offer several important awards for individual artists. The Arizona Arts Award recognizes one established artist annually, in any discipline, with a \$25,000 award, the single largest award for individual artists in the state. The Buffalo Exchange Arts Award supports emerging artists

by offering a \$10,000 award. Both awards are administered through a nomination process and come from donor advised funds. An organization called the Stonewall Foundation, started by local arts philanthropist Susan Small, has given an annual award in the past for a local visual artist to have a solo exhibition at the Tucson Museum of Art. One informed respondent believes that this support has recently shifted focus and views it as somewhat characteristic of private funding initiatives throughout the state, which seem "to come and go," noting that "many feel there is not the same critical mass of these grants/awards compared to other communities of similar size across the country."

Local universities, particularly University of Arizona, are important centers of artistic production (as we've seen throughout the state). Regarding innovation, many respondents feel the demise of the New Genres program at UA is a particularly poignant loss, and there is an overall sense that the school is not quite as strong as it once was, due in large part to the loss of some key faculty. Programs noted for their quality include visual communications, sculpture, arts in education and, on the performing arts side, ballet and jazz. One respondent involved in new media notes that "Arizona schools have invested in new technologies, such as motion capture and virtual realm equipment," but they are not utilized in exploring cutting edge practices. Overall, the University is characterized as "safer and more mediocre now," "careful" and "somewhat insular."

Many respondents point to the need for teaching more professional, business-oriented skills to artists but feel the university faculty are not particularly interested in this. "In art school, business talk is taboo, and then once you leave, there's a ten-year gap of struggling to learn that stuff . . . It can't be a dirty word, we need to see individual artists as small businesses." It is suggested that part of the resistance to learning business skills is due to a mentality that "success means catering to the mainstream...artists equate it with having to dumb down their work."

One hub of rural artistic activity is the town of Bisbee, in southern Arizona. Home to a strong literary community, the Central School Project presents regular readings by local and out-of-state poets, including an annual poetry festival. Other spirited groups making Bisbee a vibrant and

artist-friendly community include an ongoing experimental film festival, the End of the World Circus and Experiments in Momentum gallery. An example of the town's progressive nature is its commission of local artist Rose Johnson to refurbish a peace symbol painted at the base of Castle Rock, rather than having it painted over. A filmmaker living in Bisbee feels that the town is an excellent, affordable place for creating work, but relies on informal connections to larger national networks for critical feedback, information and distribution.

In June 2006, groundbreaking began on the Curley School Artisan Lofts, a project of the International Sonoran Desert Alliance, to renovate and convert a historic public school into 30 affordable live/work rental spaces for "artists, artisans and creative home businesses" within the nearby community of Ajo—an innovative development supporting artists in a more rural part of the state.

Flagstaff and Northern Arizona

Straddling the divide between its rural surroundings and the growing population at its core, Flagstaff fosters a plethora of arts activities. While noting that there is "not a lot of cutting edge work here," respondents speak highly of the region as favorable to art-making. Several respondents note the increasing divide between the working class/student neighborhoods and the growing number of second homes and gated communities, giving a sense of a shrinking middle class.

One of the main presenters and cultural centers within Flagstaff, the Coconino Center for the Arts, houses the administrative offices of the Flagstaff Cultural Partners (the local arts agency) as well as a 200-seat theater and exhibition space. Their support for local visual and folk artists includes two annual events, the Fine Craft Expo and the Native American Art Exhibit. The Center has also provided a base in recent years to the Dry Creek Arts Fellowship for their annual "Trappings of the American West" exhibit, which features functional and fine craft arts of the American cowboy. Funding for the agency comes from a mix of public and private support as well as revenue generated from a local "bed, board and booze" tax, which is shared among other groups like the Historical Society and Visitors Center. (Five of the largest local arts organizations receive 50% of the funds.) The Center also

serves as an incubator for the Flagstaff Artist Coalition, an independent, volunteer-run entity that operates an annual open studio tour and exhibition and meets monthly to provide networking opportunities for artists.

With the exception of a few Native and Western craft artists, most visual artists in the region work independently and are unable to support themselves solely on their creative work, although some have gallery representation outside the state. Many photographers in the area do commercial work for National Geographic. Venues for visual arts include exhibit space at Northern Arizona University (NAU) and restaurants and cafes that make an effort to support local artists.

There is a high number of writers in the area, many of them connected to NAU and supported locally by the Northern Arizona Book Festival, which creates interest in and demand for writing and connects with audiences. Noraz Poets, a literary organization based in Sedona, presents the work of local poets and writers in Northern Arizona and sponsors regular poetry slams. They have received grants from three community foundations within the state to support their work.

"Performers [in Sedona] tend to be more experimental than the visual artists," explains one respondent, citing work by local dance companies such as Canyon Movement and Human Nature dance collective. Because the local university doesn't have a dance department, its support for dance is weak. The Northern Arizona Ethnic Arts Network promotes traditional and ethnic performance work through their website featuring numerous performers in belly dance, Capoeira, hula, Native and African dance.

The theater scene in Flagstaff appears to be fairly active, although there is no mention of any local playwrights or originating theater artists. There is a clear need for a mid-sized performance venue to bridge the gap between the very large Orpheum Theater downtown and smaller venues like the Coconino Center. "It would be wonderful to have a space such as an old school building to rent out studios and include a restaurant, coop gallery, clothing store, nonprofit offices, theater, etc.," says one administrator, offering the Emerson Cultural Center in Bozeman, Montana, as an example of a comparable facility in a similar-sized community.

Local government support for the arts is strong in comparison to other cities of similar size. One city councilmember, for example, serves on the Flagstaff Cultural Partners board and regularly attends openings at the Center. The City Manager was also at a recent opening and commented that they wanted "Joe Six Pack to come in here and feel that this [is] a Center for the people." While the local school district doesn't actively pursue arts education opportunities, respondents note the abundance of arts activities for students and school-aged children, including artists-in-residence at the middle schools and a music program offered by a local community foundation. The Flagstaff Office of Tourism is also mentioned as a strong but untapped resource for partnering around artist support. Concerning public involvement in the arts, one respondent claims, "Arts supporters are a small group", and another feels that "only a small portion of the community gets what your work is about."

While the universities are one of the main local employers of artists and presenters of their work, respondents feel that both students and administration need to be educated about current art practices. A recent reprimand given to a professor whose students were doing site-specific installation pieces highlighted the lack of knowledge about and support for this kind of artistic practice on campus. A well-received visiting artist program that brought outside voices to the area has been dropped by the University.

At the same time, the NAU Department of Community, Culture and Environment (CCE), which focuses on "issues around the arts, the natural world and civic engagement," stands out as a receptive organization for innovative artist practices. Striving to be a connector among artists, the environmentalist community and the general public, they present local and national performers, artists, arts activists, and critics. Another example of the liberal climate in Flagstaff is the Activist Networks' annual community performance "It's The Peaks," which features rap and circus arts with an environmental message.

Another interesting example of innovation in a rural context is in the small neighboring community of Winslow, where visual artist Tina Mion and her architect husband Allan Affeldt have bought and remodeled a local hotel with

the goal of creating an arts destination. Re-opened in 1997 after being closed for several decades, the La Posada Hotel was designed by renowned regional architect Mary Colter and features 37 rooms and a gourmet restaurant, all adjoining the local railroad station. Beyond the tourism draw, the hotel has become a focal point for revitalizing the local cultural community through offering workshops, regular concerts and exhibits by local quilters and Native artists. Recognizing the need for increased infrastructure, the couple has also been involved in renovating and re-opening a local theater, starting a local arts council and actively publicizing the town in the hopes of attracting other artists to the area. Recent transplant Dan Lutzick, founder of the downtown visual arts gallery Snowdrift Art Space, talked about the potential for Winslow to become a thriving artist community and part of a growing regional connection of cultural tourist attractions alongside Santa Fe and Marfa, Texas. While remarkably cheap real estate and artist-friendly ordinances for live/work space make it highly conducive to creating work, the biggest challenge for Winslow (like many parts of the state) lies in making connections to larger art markets and systems of distribution.

NETWORKS

Phoenix and Central Arizona

Informal local networks for artists are largely discipline-specific and center primarily around physical locations like the universities and Grand Avenue artists' studios. The Collective Gesture listserv, an invitation-only list focusing on the visual arts, is one widely cited local resource and virtual community. A typical example of an informal network is the Scottsdale Breakfast Club, a group of mostly women visual artists who meet at a restaurant as a way to break the isolation of working alone.

Several Phoenix-based websites function as part artist network/part information source, showcasing the work of local artists and providing forums for connections. Artish.org and Phoenix Art Space (www.phoenixartspace.com) allow visual artists to display images of their work, while The Shizz (www.theshizz.org) and Tucson-based In Your Ear (www.in-your-ear.net) provide information on the local music scene. Durant Communications provides information to local performing artists in the Maricopa Valley through their website, www.durantcom.com. Showup.com covers the entire Phoenix art scene in all disciplines with a calendar and local reviews, while entertainment and lifestyle guide Get Out Arizona offers more limited local arts listings.

Networks for artists of color are informal but supported by institutions within and outside Arizona. Through the leadership of curator Joe Baker, the Heard Museum provides critical support, resources and exhibition opportunities to Native American artists working across traditional and contemporary forms. National advocacy organization ATLATL provides training opportunities for traditional Native artists, and the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe is another important support center outside the state. Latino artists are increasingly working across ethnic-specific communities to create works on issues like hybrid identities. Calaca offers workshops and professional development for emerging Latino artists, and the Hispanic Resource Center at ASU is another connection point across disciplines and with networks across the country. The Artists of the Black Community, a group within the Coalition of Black Organizations and

Others for the Arts, meets regularly under the leadership of ASU professor Dr. Eugene Gigsby, Jr. Growing Asian communities in Chandler and Mesa appear to have artist involvement in community festival settings, and artists receive informal support through cultural associations such as the Pakistan Information and Cultural Organization (PICO). Other minority groups in the Valley have small presences, including a well-supported gay and lesbian theater scene.

Tucson and Southern Arizona

Artists describe a variety of networks and connections to art worlds outside Tucson, in other parts of the country and abroad—interestingly, more so than within the state. One of the strongest links—as a source of inspiration, audiences and aesthetic stimulation—is to Mexico and, to a lesser extent, South America. With Tucson only an hour from the border, artists of all ethnicities and disciplines feel the positive influence of Mexican culture: “It’s the shrine on the table, the glorification of family life, the day-to-day presence of the spiritual.” Despite this openness, the arts community in Tucson overall is largely white, and artists of color tend to group together under a pan-ethnic banner because of their low numbers.

Migration and geographic linkages are strong common themes across disciplines. Many artists speak about the need to visit other places on a regular basis as part of their ongoing aesthetic education. A curator notes a strong LA-Tucson connection, with artists moving back and forth. Artists moving out of the state is a common concern, but there is, at the same time, an influx of artists priced out of major cities who move to Tucson.

In the absence of strong organizational structures, Tucson artists are innovative in creating informal local networks. Described as the “kingpins of the outsider artist group,” Paul Weir, Nadia Hagen and their performance ensemble Flam Chen are one hub of collective artistic energy. The group’s process relies upon the collective talents and contributions of other artists for the various festivals and parades they produce.

Other long-standing informal networks for artists are the Tucson Artists Group (TAG) and the Bad Girl Storytelling Brigade. With approximately 20 members ranging in age from mid-30s through mid-50s, TAG meets every other

week and puts together occasional workshops. Looking to reclaim the word "bad," the Bad Girl Storytelling Brigade is an informal group of multidisciplinary, multicultural women artists who meet regularly in members' homes to encourage each other to explore the unfamiliar and try out new mediums and disciplines.

Flagstaff and Northern Arizona

Generally artists in the Flagstaff area are described as "very supportive" of one another, although not to the degree we saw in other communities. For example, one respondent says there is "some overlap but not a lot between the Native artists and the Artists Coalition," also noting that no one has ever tried to bridge that gap. A lack of outside influences seems to reinforce the lack of local connectedness. According to one administrator, "People get a bit set in their ways." One of the particular obstacles noted in working with Native and crafts artists is limited Internet access, which requires communication by regular mail. Isolation is a consistent theme in Northern Arizona. While there are some connections to the arts community in the rest of the state, these networks are loose and informal at best. "It wouldn't take much [in the way of resources] to create some major, positive changes here," one respondent concludes.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Challenge of Innovation

Generally, there is a strong interest in and enthusiasm for building much-needed support for innovative work across the state. Artist training, infrastructure development and cultivation of interest in such work are crucial needs, requiring the efforts of artists as well as curators, critics, administrators and funders. The dominance of the commercially oriented, tourist-driven art market is a persistent theme.

One of the central goals of this project is to identify innovative practices across disciplines and traditions in a context that recognizes the unique characteristics of the Southwest. Interestingly, many of the conversations about innovation revolve around issues related to subject matter, process and/or the context in which the work is made. For several respondents, the topic sparked an immediate connection to artwork addressing local social and political issues such as water allocation and immigration. Others view innovation as a shift of perspective from the personal to the global or communal. One Flagstaff respondent comments that there's "a big local interest in moving away from personal transcendence to a different context of a worldview that recognizes interconnectedness. [Artists here] are interested in work that has a ripple effect and [is] not about the disconnected, personal statement." Another interviewee touches on the concrete mechanisms for creating work: "Innovation here is about the lack of institutional frameworks and how to do without them."

The powerful allure of the mythology of the Southwest creates expectations that influence market demand: "People visiting Arizona aren't looking to buy work they would see in New York City." This exposes some of the limits and possibilities of a regional aesthetic: "Being involved in the art world and managing to still be unique is hard." Other respondents see the tendency to value cultural products from other places over local ones: "Arizona is in love with the newness of imports."

Arizona being somewhat "off the radar" of art journals and the major art markets allows for a kind of freedom that

could feed innovation. Yet the highly supportive, nurturing environment for artists, though valued by many, also keeps critical dialogue at bay. Finding methods to maintain this supportive spirit while giving artists the tools to incorporate feedback and rigorous discourse will be important.

Generally, while respondents in some disciplines lament a lack of innovation and rigor among their peers, visual artists and representatives from visual arts organizations tend to speak on the topic with the most urgency. Performing artists seem fairly resigned to its absence. According to one, "I've gotten more blank looks here from other artists than from anyone else." A playwright adds, "The public doesn't want anything too experimental or controversial; theater is entertainment here."

For new media artists, innovation is tied to the availability of equipment, particularly new technologies. Respondents speak favorably of the Arts, Media and Engineering program at ASU and its state-of-the-art equipment as an important potential incubator for innovation, particularly if access for local artists is somehow made available. The universities in general are seen as a starting point for fostering innovation.

On the surface, one of the biggest challenges in supporting innovation across disciplines comes from traditional and folk art. Whether producing Native baskets or cowboy art, authenticity is a core value. Validating and preserving a connection to a historic or culturally specific tradition in many ways works against the pursuit of innovation. While innovation within traditional art forms clearly does exist, it creates some complex and unique challenges, particularly for ethnic-specific artists who seek to incorporate contemporary elements or ideas into their traditional work. Embracing the notion that tradition is evolving rather than static, Native American artists, for example, may use traditional processes or create conventional products such as a basket or a painting but incorporate new iconography, meanings or techniques.

Fostering openness to real experimentation is key, and preparing the cultural community would be an important first step: "We need to address the fear of being irrelevant. If you're going to ask for change, you have to

provide the motivation and training to do it." Developing new artist research and training opportunities, and flexible and responsive funding mechanisms to support them, are ways these changes could begin.

While current funding and administrative agencies certainly could support new developments, respondents also note the importance of individual artist advocates who create change outside of traditional organizational structures. These leaders are frequently mentioned as key mediators between artists and other communities, able to mobilize resources in ways that larger institutions might not be able to. Efforts to support innovative artists' practices may need to include support for developing and empowering more leadership of this kind.

Responses to the Creative Capital Model

Creative Capital is viewed as responsive and accessible to Arizona artists, and their model of supporting innovative work is highly regarded. There are discrepancies, however, in respondents' familiarity with the organization: Roughly a third had extensive knowledge prior to this study, a third had heard of the organization but were not familiar with it, and a third had no prior awareness at all. Those least familiar with Creative Capital tend to be performing artists and/or artists in rural areas.

Individuals who have had firsthand contact with Creative Capital, either as applicants or grantees, feel that the experience was beneficial in helping them to define and clarify their own creative processes. On the down side, applicants who made it through several rounds but were not ultimately selected feel the application process was labor intensive and "a huge emotional investment." Both grantees and applicants are impressed by the level of staff investment and organizational commitment to follow-through. According to one grantee, "They got very involved. I got a lot of support, they helped me to meet people and broker relationships. They understand that artists need to have lives too . . . they follow up and are proud of the artists they work with."

CREATIVE CAPITAL STATE RESEARCH PROJECT

The long-term impact of the awards is obvious to grantees and their peers. One respondent who knows several recipients feels he's "seen them bloom. It professionalized them and gave them tools to be their own business." Another describes it as "very beneficial" for a friend: "Not so much the money but the network. Opportunities opened up."

Interestingly, while the professional development opportunities are commonly described as one of the most helpful components of the program, one grantee feels the material "was too basic, good for some people but not others. [I would have liked] to have had more one-on-one time with the strategic planner." The intensive, communal environment of the retreat is somewhat off-putting for some and requires some adjustment. One respondent joked about an artist they knew who claimed, "I joined a cult."

The artist community in Arizona seems interested in and open to Creative Capital working in the region and believes that the strength of the organization's reputation would be an asset. Applicants appreciate the fact that Creative Capital is one of the few national funding sources for artists with an open application process (as opposed to being nominated or selected), and they appreciate the willingness to accept unconventional artistic formats. "How do you prioritize new work over other forms?" asks one respondent. "Creative Capital can frame that conversation in a way no one here can."

While support for Creative Capital is high, many respondents feel that a certain level of education needs to take place among local artists to prepare them for maximizing the opportunity. One curator spoke especially eloquently on the subject:

You need to start at the beginning with access to information and exposure; there's a lot of international dialogue missing here. Artists need better conceptual and craft skills, and exposure to competing schools of thought, to feel that Arizona is a place where art is important. [You] need people with the skills to have that dialogue. Sustainability and education will be important.

Overall, however, the sentiment is that artists here "have lots of potential and desire" and are ready to rise to the occasion.

Finding a source for ongoing funding to support an initiative of this type is a potential obstacle due to an “underdeveloped” philanthropic and private-sector support base. Several administrators caution that any initiative would need to be “sustained over time” and seen as a “long term, latitudinal investment.” Others see the potential presence of Creative Capital in Arizona as the crucial “tipping point” for recruiting and mobilizing new funding sources.

Bringing a national program like Creative Capital into the region clearly would require building partnerships with existing organizations currently serving artists. Respondents mention the Arizona Commission on the Arts and the Partnership for Innovation as key players in this capacity. The existing infrastructure at the Commission “could facilitate the workshop process” because “they have systems in place to get the word out.” Statewide, there are expressions of support from funder respondents with an apparent willingness to get involved.

While many see the need for local partners, there is also a strong sense that this potential organization ultimately needs to be an independent entity, something “small and autonomous.” Rolling the program into a larger institution risks diluting its impact and focus on innovation. A small, private organization could have low overhead and more flexibility in how and what they choose to fund—including potentially controversial work—than a public or donor-driven funding mechanism would. It would be necessary “to build innovation so strongly into the mission that it becomes a counterpoint to what other mainstream arts organizations are doing.”

Opportunities

The overwhelming sense that Arizona is receptive and ready for change brings forth the opportunity to address deficiencies and fortify strengths around artist issues. The following recommendations (listed in no particular order) are presented as considerations for next steps and possible program initiatives.

General:

CREATIVE CAPITAL STATE RESEARCH PROJECT

- Lobby and educate city and county officials to create artist-friendly ordinances (live/work restrictions in Tucson, zoning issues in Phoenix).
- Create language and compelling evidence around the need for innovation as a priority within the state.
- Consider an “artists summit” to galvanize artist networks statewide.
- Host local educational forums or workshops for local magazines and media outlets on how to find and cover innovative artists and art projects.
- Capitalize on Arizona’s large public sector in developing new audiences for innovative work and in seeking possible sites for artist residencies (e.g., writers in residence at local libraries).
- Investigate model residency programs that foster local-national dialogue and new work creation (e.g., Artpace in San Antonio, Texas).
- Create support and training for emerging and mid-level arts administrators and artists advocates.
- Provide financial support to fortify and establish artist-focused galleries, performances space, and other groups with the potential for supporting the creation of new work.
- Develop more formalized partnerships with local initiatives, such as MPAC, ASU’s proposed downtown campus, Phoenix Downtown Artists Coalition, and Tucson’s Rio Nuevo—as well as national ones, such as Learning in Communities (LINC) – Arts, American Artists, Artadia, and Center for Cultural Innovation.
- Create an artists task force within existing arts advocacy structures to strengthen artist involvement in policy-making.

Discipline specific:

- Given the current governor's strong support for the arts, investigate creating a state Poet Laureate position.
- Create and/or strengthen support networks for performing artists.
- Create a directory of available theater and performance spaces (including university venues with open access) that can be utilized by originating performing artists.

For public and private funders:

- Consider the creation of unrestricted artist fellowship programs.
- Reconsider the lifetime cap on Arizona Commission on the Arts' Artists Project Grants, perhaps allowing artists to re-apply after a certain period of time (5–7 years) to provide support across different career levels.
- Consider adding language to materials and applications to convey programmatic goals to artist applicants and make procedures and selection criteria as transparent as possible.
- Given the particular dearth of performing arts opportunities, consider expanding public arts programs to include public performances by local performing artists. (Los Angeles' Grand Performances is one potential model.)
- Strengthen regional touring opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We wish to thank the members of the Arizona Partnership for Innovation (see Appendix A), Robert Booker and the entire staff of the Arizona Commission on the Arts for their generosity and guidance, the Tucson/Pima Arts Council and the Flagstaff Cultural Partners for providing meeting space, the management and staff of the Clarendon Hotel and Hotel Congress, Greg Esser for initiating the proposal and Dwight Walth from the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture for sharing data from their recent online artists survey.

We are indebted to our colleagues Caron Atlas, Barbara Schaffer Bacon, Helen Brunner and Kathie deNobriga for their many valuable contributions.

A very special “thank you” to Celia O’Donnell from Creative Capital for her excellent work overseeing this project, Lise Kloeppel for her amazing administrative assistance, and especially to Gregory Sale and Claire West from the Arizona Commission on the Arts for their incredible dedication, knowledge and effort in assisting us with this project.

Finally, we wish to thank the many artists, writers, performers, administrators and creative people of all types who participated in our research by generously giving their time, expertise and opinions.

APPENDIX A: ARIZONA PARTNERSHIP FOR INNOVATION MEMBERS

(in alphabetical order, as of June 2006)

David Aguirre

Board Member
Tucson/Pima Arts Council (T/PAC)
Tucson

Joe Baker

Curator of Contemporary Art
Heard Museum
Phoenix

Sheilah Britton

ASU Institute for Studies in the Arts, Media & Engineering
Programs
Tempe

Chris Burawa

Literature Director and Public Information Officer
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Phoenix <mailto:cburawa@AZArts.gov>

Manuel Burruel

Visual Artist
Glendale

Karen Christensen

Independent Consultant
Tucson

Liz Cohen

Visual Artist (Creative Capital Recipient)
Paradise Valley

Shelley Cohn

Independent Consultant
Phoenix

Dan Coleman

Composer
Crowded Air, Inc.
Tucson

Barbara Cully

Poet & Teacher
Tucson

Greg Esser

Artist & Community Arts Leader
Public Arts Network, Americans for the Arts
Phoenix

Karen Falkenstrom

Poet/Musician
Tucson

Rudy Guglielmo Jr.

Program Officer
Arizona Community Foundation
Phoenix

Dora Hernandez

Arts Collection Manager
Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture
Phoenix

Laraine Herring

English Faculty/Communications
Creative Writing Program, Yavapai College
Prescott

Joel Hiller

Independent Consultant
Prescott

Kathy Hotchner

Vice President & Director of Performing Arts & Education
Scottsdale Centre for the Performing Arts
Scottsdale

Susan Krane

Vice President & Director of Exhibitions and Education
Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art
Scottsdale

CREATIVE CAPITAL STATE RESEARCH PROJECT

Glen Lineberry

Owner / Director
Bentley Gallery
Scottsdale

Victor Lodato

Playwright
Tucson

Beverly McIver

Visual Artist (Creative Capital Recipient)
ASU School of Art
Phoenix

Tina Mion

Visual Artist
Winslow

Judy Mohraz Ph.d

President and CEO
Virginia C. Piper Trust
Scottsdale

Mark Newport

Visual Artist (Creative Capital Recipient)
ASU School of Art
Mesa

Colleen Jennings-Roggensack

Executive Director
ASU Public Events
Tempe

Anne-Marie Russell

Executive Director
Museum of Contemporary Arts, Tucson
& Toole Shed Studios
Tucson

Gregory Sale (co-chair)

Visual Arts Director
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Phoenix

Frances Sjoberg

Director of Literature
Poetry Center, University of Arizona
Tucson

Lisle Soukup

Executive Director
Arizona Citizens for the Arts (AZCA)
Phoenix

John Spiak

Curatorial Museum Specialist
ASU Art Museum
Tempe

Richard Trujillo

Playwright
Phoenix

Dwight Walth

Director of Grants Programs and Community Initiatives
Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture
Phoenix

Roxanne Weaver

Director
Arizona Five Arts Circle
Scottsdale

Claire West (co-chair)

Performing Arts Director
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Phoenix

Cyd West

Director of Research & Economic Partnerships
Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture (MPAC)
Phoenix

APPENDIX B: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS CHART

	Total	%	Central	%	North	%	South	%	Out-of-state
Role¹									
Artist	55	60%	31	61%	4	44%	19	63%	1
Intermediary ²	31	34%	18	35%	3	33%	10	33%	
Support ³	13	14%	8	16%	2	22%	3	10%	
Discipline									
Visual	34	37%	20	39%	5	56%	8	27%	1
Film/Media	8	9%	2	4%	0	0%	6	20%	
Performing	15	16%	13	25%	0	0%	2	7%	
Interdisc.	6	7%	3	6%	0	0%	3	10%	
Literature	8	9%	1	2%	1	11%	6	20%	
Multidisc.	15	16%	8	16%	2	22%	5	17%	
Ethnicity									
White	60	66%	31	61%	6	67%	23	77%	
Hispanic	15	16%	10	20%		0%	5	17%	
Black	2	2%	2	4%		0%	0	0%	
Asian	4	4%	2	4%		0%	2	7%	
American Indian	4	4%	3	6%	0	0%	0	0%	1
Other	3	3%	1	2%	2	22%	0	0%	
Not Identified	3	3%	2	4%	1	11%	0	0%	
Male	38	42%	26	51%	3	33%	9	30%	
Female	52	57%	25	49%	6	67%	21	70%	1
Interviews									
Face-to-Face	57		36		9		12		
Group Mtgs.	26		14		0		12		
Phone	8		1				6		1
Total	91		51	56%	9	10%	30	33%	1

¹ Interviewees included two Creative Capital grantees, two applicants and one Arizona-based board member.

² Includes administrators, curators, presenters/producers, etc.

³ Includes public and private funders

APPENDIX C: CONSULTANT TEAM

Roberto Bedoya is the Executive Director of the Tucson/Pima Arts Council. He has worked for years as a writer and arts consultant in the areas of cultural policy and support systems for artists. As an arts consultant he has worked on projects for The Ford Foundation (*Mapping Native American Cultural Policy*), The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations (*Creative Practice in the 21st Century*), The New York Foundation for the Arts (*A Cultural Blueprint for New York City*), The Urban Institute (*Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for US Artists and the Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project*), and The Center for Arts and Culture (*Cultural Policy at the Grassroots: Los Angeles*). He is the author of the white paper *U.S. Cultural Policy: Its Politics of Participation, Its Creative Potential* (www.npnweb.org) and *Deliberative Cultural Policy Practices* (www.culturalcommons.org/comment.cfm).

Prior to his work as a consultant, Mr. Bedoya was the Executive Director of the National Association of Artists' Organizations (NAAO), a national arts service organization for individual artists and artist-centered organizations, primarily visual and interdisciplinary organizations. NAAO was a co-plaintiff in the Finley vs. NEA lawsuit. Bedoya has been a Rockefeller Fellow at New York University and a Visiting Scholar at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

Eric Wallner is the Cultural Affairs Supervisor for the City of Ventura, California. He has over fifteen years of experience working with a wide range of nonprofit arts organizations—from artist-focused organizations and local arts agencies (such as Learning Through Education in the Arts, New Langton Arts, Queens Council on the Arts) to institutions working at the state and national level (Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, NEA, OPERA America, Urban Institute). He holds a BA from Brown University in Art/Semiotics and a MA in Arts Policy and Administration from Ohio State University. While a Research Associate at the Urban Institute (a Washington D.C.-based think tank), he spent three years as a lead researcher on *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S.* and was a co-project manager for the design and construction of a national database of artists resources now known as NYFA

Source (www.nyfa.org). He also worked extensively on *Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation, A Study of the Charitable Sector in Bermuda, and the Performing Arts Research Coalition* (a survey of arts participation in partnership with five national performing arts service organizations). He is currently Cultural Affairs Supervisor for the City of Ventura, California.

Creative Capital State Research Project

Findings for Maine

**Researched and written by Kathie deNobriga
and Barbara Schaffer Bacon**

August 2006

**Creative Capital State Research Project:
A Letter of Introduction from the Maine Arts
Commission**

Creative Capital sets a groundbreaking and necessary standard for the funding of individual artists. We at the Maine Arts Commission have long admired their system, and when they announced the launch of the State Research Project (SRP), we saw a unique opportunity, not only to benefit from an analysis of artist support in Maine, but also to create a funding program with the guidance of an established and respected mentor. Finding our goals firmly in alignment, we leapt at the chance to partner with Creative Capital.

In 2002, Maine initiated creative economy research, development and implementation, with a regional conference endorsed by Governor John E. Baldacci, and the state has since gained a fuller understanding of the value of culture to economy. By 2006, when the SRP commenced in Maine, we were ready to turn our attention and emphasis to the fundamental creative economy constituent: the individual artist.

A 75-member group, including representatives from cultural institutions, residency programs and the philanthropic community as well as individual artists and politicians, was presented to Creative Capital's consultants as the key to any evaluation of the situation in Maine. The resulting assessment of artists' issues is invaluable for bolstering the position of our state's artist residents; for encouraging emerging artists to settle in Maine; for examining sustainability issues, audience and fiscal support; and for advancing recognition of the quality-of-life value artists bring to their communities.

June of 2006 became Creative Capital's month in Maine, as the foundation's director, staff and consultants made separate visits to the state, covering various regions, disciplines and organizational structures to take in the breadth and depth of Maine's creative life. They understood the importance of placing the current investigation within an environmental and historical context encompassing Maine's rich artistic legacy and the profound relationship of artist to place.

CREATIVE CAPITAL STATE RESEARCH PROJECT

Artist Anna Hepler's statement that "artists come to Maine to live and then figure out how to make a living" exemplifies the do-it-yourself, rugged-individualist attitude that sustains Maine's artists. Quality of life is the imperative, isolation the challenge, technology the enabler. Creative Capital held up a mirror, and Maine took a frank, critical and motivating look at itself.

The struggle for many granting and presenting organizations lies in validating support for challenging work. Creative Capital supports supremely original and inventive artists, and their interest in Maine lent credence to similar initiatives here. The SRP helped us make the case that truly original thinking and innovation happen only in a supportive environment, where artists can, in turn, propel political, social and economic development.

Looking forward, Maine is committed to creating a grant program for artists designed on the Creative Capital model. The Maine Arts Commission is in the process of formalizing the structure of this grant program and has secured leadership funding. We hope to ensure its success by endowing the fund and folding in Creative Capital's Professional Development program. The timing of the State Research Project has been perfect, and its message resonates: Support for innovative artists is of primary concern.

Donna McNeil
Assistant Director
Maine Arts Commission

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Maine research was conducted through Internet investigation, face-to-face interviews, phone interviews and focus groups. Under the guidance of Donna McNeil, assistant director at the Maine Arts Commission, the Commission issued invitations to 75 people across the state. During the week of June 12, 2006, researchers Kathie deNobriga and Barbara Schaffer Bacon visited Maine to discern elements of the Maine arts infrastructure, discover artists' needs and initiatives and explore the nature of artistic innovation in the state.

A total of 22 people attended three focus groups held at SPACE in downtown Portland, hosted by director Nat May on June 13-14. On June 15, a group of four (including the leadership of the Center for Maine Contemporary Art) attended a focus group in one of CMCA's galleries. On June 16 the entire Maine Arts Commission, along with representatives of its nine committees, attended a daylong meeting in which the primary agenda focused on the Creative Capital research. The commissioners and committee members participated in a full-group morning discussion, and then continued in smaller committee meetings in the afternoon. The fifth and final focus group of six people was held at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture on June 17, on the afternoon following its first guest lecture of the season.

In addition to the five focus groups and the many one-on-one conversations during the visit over meals, in galleries and in studios, the research team also interviewed more than twenty people by phone. The complete list of participants is provided in Appendix A. The research team also conducted extensive Internet research on Maine artist organizations, the New England Council, the New England Foundation for the Arts, the Creative Economy and various demographic websites.

—Kathie deNobriga and Barbara Schaffer Bacon

OVERVIEW OF MAINE

Maine is a state of and for the arts. The state has a rich heritage as a place where creativity and art are appreciated as a part of everyday life. Its craft traditions are world renowned, including Native American basketry and fiber and woodworking. Traditional Franco fiddling, the root of Cajun music, thrives in Maine, and vaudeville was reborn here in the 1970s through the work of master clowns and mimes.

Maine's landscapes have long attracted artists who have summered, studied or settled in communities throughout the state alongside artists "from here," to create a legacy as a place where creativity is valued. In the last half of the nineteenth century, John James Audubon and many other artists came to Maine for its natural beauty. Thomas Cole's dramatic landscapes helped attract the "rusticators," some of Maine's first tourists, who settled in Bar Harbor. A long and strong investigation of contemporary art, involving Andrew Wyeth and Robert Indiana, has continued unabated since the late 1880s, embracing vigorous aesthetic debates and artistic discoveries.

Maine is also known for its writers. The land and sea have inspired Maine writers Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (America's first professional poet) and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Their contemporary Henry David Thoreau focused on Maine's natural wonders as an outsider in his travel narratives. Edna St. Vincent Millay, Kenneth Roberts and Edward Arlington Robinson are but a few of many Maine-born poets. Temporary Maine residents who have contributed to Maine literature include Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, Mary McCarthy, Robert Lowell and Rachel Carson. E.B. White, a frequent summer visitor, moved to Maine in 1938 and has been adopted as a native son.

Contemporary writers are abundant and prolific: Maine reportedly has the highest number of writers per capita in the country. There is a strong service organization for writers (see Appendix B), as well as a new low-residency MFA at Stonecoast (University of Southern Maine) and a number of poetry journals such as the Beloit Poetry Review. The Maine Humanities Council's Maine Center for the Book, established in 1997 with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, promotes libraries, reading, and literacy statewide.

Residency programs like those at Skowhegan School for Painting and Sculpture, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Bates Dance Festival and numerous others cultivate new ideas, bring in outside voices and encourage innovation. Contemporary art in Maine today is also fueled by strong college and university programs, including an MFA at Maine College of Art (MECA) and the New Media Program at the University of Maine/Orono. Student artists often choose to stay in Maine after graduation, and artists from other areas come to Maine because of familial ties, the slower pace and lower cost of living in the more rural areas and the perceived quality of life. Several participants cite 9/11 as a cause for leaving New York and coming to Maine.

Maine has been proactive in protecting and expanding its cultural resources. Its nationally recognized Creative Economy initiatives are now producing results in Maine communities and have buy-in from leaders in government and business. Maine's strong foundation in the creative economy lays the groundwork for public and private investment in creative assets—including artists. The drive for a creative economy accentuates the value of creativity generally and of artists specifically. Business leaders and elected officials at state and local levels are predisposed to developing cultural assets as a strategy for economic growth.

"Maine's arts and cultural sector is more than central to quality of place. It is also a little-understood and long-overlooked economic asset with tremendous opportunities for generating jobs and companies," states *Creative Economy: Creativity, Commerce and Community*, the fall 2006 report of the Creative Economy Council. Spotlighting Maine's arts and cultural sector, the report notes,

The dual skills of 'creating and designing' are particularly important to the New England region, which can no longer compete in the marketplace of low-price, high-volume production. Instead, the economic future of the region rests on globally competitive industries whose principal competitive advantage derives from new designs, new technologies, artistic contributions, uniqueness and/or authenticity.

The report provides thoughtful investment strategies that can yield benefits for artists and includes a significant section on the future of the creative economy, with a focus on arts education.

Maine is a largely rural state, 40th in US population, with 1.3 million people spread over 21,500 miles—a population density of 60 persons per square mile. The state's largest city, Portland, had a 2003 population of 64,000 people, with 230,000 in the metro area. Augusta, the state capital, reports fewer than 20,000. Maine's population is 97% white, with the remaining 3% being (in order of size) multi-racial, Latino, Asian, Native American and African American.

Cultural enterprise is concentrated in the south and the coasts. Yet rich cultural traditions and experimentation also exist in the west and the north, areas where artists generally consider themselves under-served by most of the state's cultural infrastructure. A sense of isolation is widely cited as one of the largest challenges to the state's creative artists; at the same time, many acknowledge the freedom that isolation can offer. Understanding the interplay among isolation, independence and creativity is essential for understanding Maine's creative life.

At the same time, Maine artists actively work to overcome the limits of isolation by connecting through informal and formal networks to share information, work cooperatively and support one another's practice. Many visual artists identify themselves as curators as well, using a "do it yourself" approach to create exhibitions of their own and others' work. This strong DIY ethic, linked with scrappy and inventive tactics, is the hallmark of today's Maine artists. Marked by independence, entrepreneurship and lack of pretension, they report a high degree of camaraderie, with strong peer networks.

High taxes and a seasonal economy impact Maine's artists. According to the Tax Foundation, 13.5% of Mainer's incomes go to local and state taxes, well above the national average of 10%. As a consequence Maine residents enjoy excellent schools, libraries and medical care, but their discretionary giving is limited: The Maine Philanthropy

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Center ranked Maine 49th in individual charitable giving, based on 2003 tax data. With no Fortune 500 companies located in Maine, there is a limited resource base in both public and private sectors. Though the household median income in Maine is \$57,636, the per capita income is only \$18,457 and 11.35% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Many artists feel that studio space and home ownership are generally attainable, except in Portland and a few coastal communities where gentrification is at full throttle. Another positive element is recent legislation that made health insurance more accessible through the state-sponsored Dirigo program, with sliding fees based on income.

Many Mainers, including artists, patch together several part-time jobs, typically seasonal tourism-related jobs, to make ends meet. Tourism is Maine's largest and fastest-growing sector, accounting for roughly 10% of available jobs. Vacation homes make up 15% of the housing units in the state, and Maine's population reportedly doubles in the summer, particularly along the coastal areas.

According to Dun & Bradstreet, statistics in *Americans for the Arts' 2006 Creative Industries* report—the first national study that encompasses both the nonprofit and for-profit arts industries—Maine is home to 2,605 arts-related businesses (2.1 per 1000 residents) that employ 9,920 people, which ranks the state 19th in the US. (This is an understated statistic because a number of artists and nonprofits do not register with Dun and Bradstreet.)

More than 1,400 artists are registered in the Maine Arts Commission's statewide directory, but using an expanded definition from the New England Council's Creative Economy Initiative, the 2000 census shows 17,411 people in the creative workforce, or about 2.7 percent of the state's total workers. The number of cultural non-profit organizations in Maine is reported at 1,960.

The Maine Center for Business and Economic Research and the New England Environmental Finance Center at the University of Southern Maine compared Maine's total workforce to the state's creative workforce in a 2004

report on the creative economy. It showed that members of the creative workforce

- are older than members of the entire workforce, are more likely to be white, and are slightly less likely to be married;
- have more formal education. Some 44 percent have earned at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 25 percent in the workforce as a whole;
- are less likely to be unemployed than workers overall;
- are much more likely to be self-employed, are less likely to work for for-profit organizations, and are just as likely to work for non-profit or government agencies as are members of the workforce as a whole;
- have lower annual earnings than the average member of the workforce, despite the fact that they have more education. (This is not true for New England as a whole, where creative workforce members have roughly the same annual earnings as the rest of the workforce);
- have average household incomes that are roughly equal to the average for the state workforce. (For New England, the average household income of creative workforce members significantly exceeds the average of those in the entire workforce. This is known as the "Supportive Partner Effect.")

The Maine Arts Commission (MAC) plays an active role in developing the arts in Maine. In focus groups and interviews alike, artists and cultural leaders express respect for the Maine Arts Commission. The staff demonstrates a deep knowledge of artists and arts activity throughout the state, particularly in the visual arts. The Maine Arts Commission and its staff are consistently cited as trusted leaders for grantmaking and arts development. MAC's mission includes a commitment to freedom of expression, and it has publicly defended controversial works. The Maine Arts Commission, which includes artists and a wide array of stakeholders in cultural and creative economy development, is geographically representative of the state. MAC develops leadership for the cultural sector by including nearly 75 individuals (beyond the 16-member Commission itself) in nine active committees that advise on policy, planning and program development. The Commission's website is <http://mainearts.maine.gov>.

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Even with a relatively small budget, ranked 34 of 50 US States (58¢ per capita), the Maine Arts Commission supports individual artists in the following ways:

- Individual Artist Fellowships: three annual unrestricted awards of \$13,000 each for artistic excellence (one each in visual, literary, and performing arts);
- Fellowship in the Traditional Arts: one annual award of \$13,000;
- Good Idea Grants: 26 \$1,000 grants awarded annually to artists of all disciplines to assist in the creation of new work or professional development;
- Artists in Maine Communities: collaborative grants of \$7,500 each, designed to encourage artist/community partnerships; typically a total of \$100,000 or more annually;
- artME: a series of professional development workshops/seminars addressing relevant topics and disciplines and presented across the state;
- Traditional Arts Apprenticeships awarded annually to master tradition-bearers and First Nation peoples; three annual awards of \$3,000 each;
- Percent for Art Program for the acquisition of new art work for newly constructed or renovated state-funded buildings, including public schools, community colleges, University of Maine facilities, and all state buildings.

MAC is a member of the Cultural Affairs Council, an alliance authorized by the state legislature in 1979 with six additional statewide cultural agencies (Historical Society, Historic Preservation, Archives, Library, State Museum and Maine Humanities Council). The Cultural Affairs Council is a forum for interagency cooperation, planning and statewide leadership that was cited as one of ten exemplary public policy initiatives in the country (*Policy Partners: Making the Case for State Cultural Investment*, the Pew Charitable Trusts, 2002). The alliance was responsible for the 2000 New Century Community Program, which secured \$4.2 million in special funding for outreach and services to strengthen the state's cultural infrastructure. The Cultural Affairs Council also helped craft legislation that enables artists to pay their estate taxes with art works and, most recently, legislation that

creates tax incentives to boost film production in the state.

Ten years ago, the Arts Commission initiated a major statewide assessment of cultural resources with its Discovery Research project. Discovery Research took the innovative approach of using professional folklorists to discover folk artists and folkways as part of community cultural assessment and planning. In 34 projects over the past decade, Discovery Research has identified and inventoried thousands of Maine artists, cultural organizations, historic sites and traditions. Thirty geographic communities representing 60% of Maine's area and four communities of interest (such as the fiber arts community) participated. Only two regions have not yet participated, and the program's staff is working to develop local support there. Discovery Research has created additional capacity for Maine communities to experience cultural programming in three ways: Existing cultural organizations increased their understanding of cultural resources and needs, new cultural organizations were created and informal organizations emerged in many locales. A new statewide consortium of local arts developers, all interested in the intersection of cultural and economic development, has begun to organize as the Creative Communities Alliance of Maine.

Maine's Creative Economy work is robust. A decade of Discovery Research has established Maine as a national leader in creative economic development and made it possible for the Creative Economy Initiative to gain footing with the state's political and business leaders. In 2004 Governor John E. Baldacci sponsored a Creative Economy Summit that included 670 participants from the business, economic development, education, arts, political and creative sectors across New England. He encouraged participants to use the conference to develop collaborative strategies and policies to pursue Creative Economy initiatives in Maine. "We will open the door even wider to the concept that every Maine person can reach his or her full potential if we embrace the arts, embrace creativity, embrace diversity, embrace entrepreneurship, embrace innovation . . . [in] a renaissance that today we call the Creative Economy." The Creative Economy Council appointed after the summit issued a groundbreaking report in partnership with the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center

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that outlines the valuable impact of arts and culture on the state's economy and offers policy recommendations to enhance the creative sector.

(Available at www.umaine.edu/mcsc/Research/EcoDev/CreativeEconomy.pdf)

According to the report, from 2000 to 2004, Maine's creative workforce added 5,474 jobs to the economy and grew by 9% compared to the overall job growth rate of 7%. The report's recommendations for sustaining creative jobs and economic growth include expanding the industry 20% by 2015, doubling the arts and cultural sector by 2020, improving infrastructure, investing in the creative workforce and supporting arts education, downtowns and creative partnerships.

CULTURAL ECOLOGY

State agencies have shown leadership, initiative and a willingness to advocate for artist-friendly legislation, including favorable estate laws, film incentives and a health insurance plan that serves artists and other low-income residents. It is worth noting that at least two state legislators have a strong arts background, and the current chair of the Maine Arts Commission is the former mayor of Bangor. MAC has successfully promulgated an understanding of and investment in the idea of creative economy. This has been accomplished through a multi-layered, multi-year program of research, cross-sector convenings, cross-agency collaborations and program investment, based on MAC's conviction that long-term networks of local connections and support are as important for creating an environment in which artists can thrive as are art-world connections.

After a decade of experience with Maine's Discovery Research program, MAC is now shifting its efforts toward building the capacity of community cultural organizations and integrating community arts development with creative economy interests. A capacity-building program for Maine's local arts agencies and creative economy organizations seeks to strengthen local arts and cultural organizations through conventions, cultural planning, workshops, technical assistance and other developmental efforts. MAC's community arts development work, originating with Discovery Research projects, has spawned art centers and local cultural development groups that are tuned into local artists and are developing programs that will support and showcase them. The emergence of a Creative Communities Alliance opens opportunities for more employment for artists as teachers, in-state performance and exhibition tours, production residencies, and informal networking, strengthening the infrastructure for artist support. MAC and artist service organizations can play a key role in stimulating a focus on the individual artist in this arena.

Maine's artist communities and residency programs, particularly Skowhegan School for Painting and Sculpture and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, bring serious artists to the state every year and help to perpetuate Maine's reputation for and tradition of creative endeavor.

The residency centers are also significant continuing education facilities and advocates for artists and audiences. Through lecture series, readings and special events, these artists' communities create opportunities for dialogue with outside artists who bring fresh ideas for exchange.

The two major residency centers are in good physical condition, are reasonably well endowed and have added equipment to keep up with new technology and digital art forms. Some alumni return to summer or settle in Maine, expanding the community of professional artists who call the state home and support local programs. Several have turned over valuable collections to Maine institutions: Alex Katz, for example, added a wing to the Colby College Museum for his paintings and papers and actively contributes to the collections of both Colby and the Farnsworth Museum.

In addition to the best-known communities, two others, the Eastern Frontier Society's Norton Island Residency Program and the Robert McNamara Foundation, are members of the Alliance for Artists Communities. Other residency programs abound, including The Maine Photographic Workshop, The Photography Collective, Corinna House on Monhegan Island, Kingdom Falls and others. New small retreat centers continue to open: For example, the property associated with poet May Sarton will become an artist residency under the guidance of the Surf Point Foundation. Many of the above communities provide a limited number of free or reduced-cost slots for Maine artists to participate in their programs.

It is worth noting that from its very beginning, Skowhegan has had a strong history of serving artists of color, with diverse artists deeply involved in artist selection and governance. This commitment to diversity, visible in the 2006 class, is also reflected in its broad and inclusive aesthetic.

Public and private colleges and universities play a vital role in Maine's arts ecology, particularly in the visual and media arts. In addition to providing undergraduate and graduate instruction in all artistic disciplines, including film, video and new media, these provide part- and full-time employment for many professional and emerging artists

as adjunct faculty and staff. The stereotypical "town/gown" dynamic is largely absent. Faculty members engage with local cultural institutions and artists, regardless of their connection to the degree programs.

Visual artists in Portland particularly credit the Maine College of Art (MECA), with its downtown campus, a contemporary art gallery and an MFA program, as playing a key role in the lively art scene, catalyzing innovative and collaborative work and inspiring a more adventurous aesthetic. The MFA program at MECA has created "an exciting community who's thinking conceptually. I've seen the change in the past ten years," says Alison Ferris, curator at Bowdoin College. The guest lectures and weeklong summer residencies bring national and international artists to Maine and contribute to the flow of ideas in and out of the state.

The Stonecoast MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Southern Maine (USM) offers one of the nation's leading "low residency" programs. Maureen Stanton, who recently won one of Maine's three \$13,000 Fellowships, says, "I went to a summer class there in 1997 and got good responses from great writers. That encouraged me to go graduate school in writing, and that really launched my career."

Private colleges provide a boost to artists through their galleries and academic programs. The museum and gallery curators at Bates College of Art, Bowdoin College and Colby College regularly present Maine artists alongside notable contemporary artists and include Maine artists in their permanent collections. These curators actively follow the work of these artists and seek opportunities to bring them to the attention of the public and their colleagues around the country. At Bowdoin, half of each year's purchasing budget is spent on work by Maine artists.

Bates, Bowdoin and Colby also have theatre/dance departments, producing a large number of well-trained dancers who routinely dance (unpaid) with the dozen or so choreographers in the state. The summer Bates Dance Festival is internationally known, and guest choreographers attract professional dancers and choreographers from across New England to their master classes and workshops. The Festival, led by nationally regarded presenter Laura Faure, has found the resources to include local artists and

develop community connections, albeit in a limited fashion. (Information from the focus groups and interviews about the performing arts was limited: None of the seventeen faculty members and instructors invited to participate represented performing arts departments or programs.)

The University of Maine system has five campuses that support significant arts activity—through their galleries, faculty engagement, and various presenting activities. In 1993 the University of Maine (UM)/Orono established one of the country's first digital media degrees (now offering an MFA), and its students have participated in the Boston CyberArts Festival from its beginning. UM/Orono maintains a digital media lab and requires all BFA students to take at least three courses in digital media. In conjunction with a group of international and local artists, UM/Orono has organized "Without Borders 2," a showcase of emerging new technology-based art that explores performance, video, sculpture, music and environmental art forms.

The spirit of collaboration is evidenced throughout the state. Twenty-five institutions from all over Maine are collaborating on a statewide celebration of printmaking, springing from informal conversations in the past year among nine curators. The multiple organizations are each mounting separate exhibitions, but they are partnering on statewide education and marketing efforts. The Center for Maine Contemporary Art (CMCA), in Rockport, regularly works with the New Media Program at UM/Orono and SPACE Gallery in Portland to create "Plugged In," a biennial exhibition of technology-based art now in its third iteration. CMCA is a frequent partner with other arts groups statewide, collaborating on artist services and education as well as shared exhibitions. Working with the Maine Arts Commission, seven film festivals combined efforts to obtain a \$42,000 grant from the state tourism office to jointly plan an expanded marketing campaign. The previous year, a similar grant funded a unique state map created by Maine Fiberarts, connecting and promoting all fiber artists in Maine.

Nearly all participants cite SPACE, which presents contemporary, emerging and unconventional arts, artists and ideas, as a nexus for innovation and collaboration. But some worry about burnout and observe that music presentations are becoming more prevalent there, perhaps

because of a less arduous installation and preparation period.

Artists' collaborations are abundant, particularly among visual and literary artists. "It's easy to find people to work-[there are] not that many people here," says Nat May, director of SPACE. Odelle Bowman of after-school arts program A Company of Girls agrees: "There's a collegial atmosphere, a network unique to Maine. We're all creating out of sprit and instinct."

Cross-sector interest in creativity is strong. Inspired by the work of economist Richard Florida and interested in attracting and retaining creative types and innovators, Midcoast Magnet, based in Rockland, brings people together to develop innovative projects that support creativity, livability and economic sustainability. In 2005, Governor Baldacci recognized the organization's work as a positive force for change in the region with a Governor's Challenge Grant. Another example is PopTech, an annual three-day summit in Camden that explores cutting-edge ideas, emerging technologies and new forces of change that are shaping the future. The conference brings together 500 visionary thinkers in the sciences, technology, business, design, the arts, education, government and culture.

The arts in Maine enjoy some business and foundation support. Local architect and SPACE board member Chris Campbell bought the building where SPACE is located and provides affordable studios on the top floors for 30 visual artists, thus helping to create a vibrant interdisciplinary scene. A number of artists support themselves by running their own businesses: Bakery Studios, for instance, is an artist-owned and operated business, complete with a small storefront restaurant.

The Maine Community Foundation also contributes to the arts ecology, with 10% of its donor-advised funding dedicated to the arts. It recently responded to a challenge grant from the Surdna Foundation creating a pilot program of fellowships to high school art teachers, with \$4,000 for personal artmaking or enrichment and \$1,000 for school supplies and programming. MCF advocated expanding the program to include teachers in all grades and raised a one-to-one match of \$100,000 for the three-year initiative.

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The Community Foundation also offers three modest fellowships: the Martin Dibner Fellowship for Maine Writers, alternating between fiction and poetry (\$500-\$1,000), the Jane Morrison Memorial Film Fund (\$1,000-\$2,000) and the Expansion Arts Fund (\$500-\$5,000) to support indigenous, ethnic or rural arts programs. With a statewide mandate and a track record for art support, the Community Foundation could be a significant partner in new artist support. Yet Carl Little of the Community Foundation notes that it generally views itself as "not in the business of fundraising." They manage and distribute funds but rarely solicit funds aggressively.

Every focus group was asked to suggest names of individuals, foundations or corporations who might be interested in funding a new artist-support initiative.

Cities throughout Maine make vital contributions to the arts. Through the Maine Arts Commission's Discovery Research, designed to assist communities with strategic cultural research and development, many smaller cities have invested in their creative economies. Bangor is a prime example: The relocation of University of Maine/Orono's Art Museum and the creation of a new children's museum have catalyzed downtown redevelopment. Bangor initiated its own annual American Folk Festival in 2005, after three years as a site for the National Folk Festival (coordinated by the National Council for the Traditional Arts). The city is now investing \$125,000 annually to develop and promote its cultural assets.

New arts venues have also found support in Eastport, Belfast, Andover-Foxcroft and other locations. For example, the Beehive Design Collective—artists and community organizers who produce posters, banners and other graphic materials as visual teaching tools on social issues—was recently able to purchase the historic Clark Perry House in Machias, with financing and support from Coastal Enterprises Incorporated (CEI), a strong community development corporation that understands the nature of cultural investment.

In Portland, an arts district and the Maine College of Art have created a nexus for the revitalization of certain parts of downtown. Mayor Jim Cohen has supported the Creative Economy Initiative and labels himself "the

creative economy mayor." Still, Portland is at a critical juncture in terms of gentrification. Although local government boasts of its arts district and cultural assets and has supported Sacred Heart Artist Housing and Anderson Street Studios, many feel that that city could do more. Artists are finding fewer opportunities to develop studios, and presentation venues are closing.

Aside from a few designated projects, housing costs have become prohibitive. The Bakery Photographic Collective recently moved their operation 10 miles away from Portland: Rent and a low-cost renovation loan from the City of Westbrook allowed them to triple their space and expand their programming.

Public art thrives in Maine cities, with strong leadership from MAC. The Percent for Art Program dates from 1979 and has placed artwork at 410 sites, with over \$7 million dollars' worth directly commissioned from artists; its example has been followed by many cities, towns and private organizations. The Maine Arts Commission is organizing a major 2008 Public Arts Conference, and a new commission, *Fisherman's Memorial Tide Park Gate*, will become Maine's largest public artwork, representing a fundraising commitment of about \$1.5 million dollars. The privately-run Maine Turnpike Authority recently allocated \$120,000 for public art at three rest areas due for renovation, with a promise of an additional \$100,000 for art in its new offices. In addition, the federal government has allocated nearly \$200,000 per site for artwork at two new border stations in Jackman and Calais.

Arts in education contribute to the infrastructure for artists. The Commission funds Arts in Learning grants from \$2,250 to \$16,000 in all 34 school districts in Maine. For many artists, these school residencies have become integral to their ability to make a living. Choreographer Louis Gervais calls these residences his "bread and butter. As performing artists, we have to teach. There is money for artists in schools. I had to choose between essence and form, and I gave up the professional form. Now it's a gift, not a job, to perform." Colby College offers a summer institute for arts educators, offering stipends to those who go on to conduct workshops in their own school systems. There is also an active alliance of Maine arts educators.

NETWORKS

Participation in networks, formal and informal, is generally strong. In spite of their sense of relative isolation, artists are not insular. They attend shows and lectures, support one another and appreciate the influx of "outside" artists brought by the colleges and artists communities. There is little attitude that it should be "all Maine artists, all the time." Proximity to Boston and New York enables many artists to be connected with artists, art trends and venues beyond Maine's borders. Several artists echo the idea that "We don't have to replicate what they have in Boston and New York: We can go visit there and make something different up here."

Informal networks, both discipline-based and interdisciplinary, function for creative collaboration, for getting work produced or shows mounted, for critical response, and for social purposes. Informal networks are particularly strong in Portland, sometimes based on shared housing or studio space, such as the artist-owned Bakery Building. Networks also help artists produce their work inexpensively through barter in the Maine Time/Dollar Network. Installation artist Amy Stacy Curtis formed *MUSE: a Discussion and Networking Group for Creatives* that combines online and face-to-face networking. Zero Station in Portland sponsors the *Citizen Salon*, an informal weekly gathering "involving the sharing of political and cultural information in an open, comfortable environment." First Friday Art Walks, a monthly open gallery/open studio event in Portland, has been a big success and was entirely artist-generated. An annual three-week festival of new work, *WORKNOT*, now in its seventh year, is completely organized by artists and collectives.

Formal networks include the highly regarded Bakery Photography Collective. This group of more than 80 professional photographers is preparing to move from Portland to a mill in Westbrook, where they will expand from their current 800 to 4,000 square feet of space to include eight darkrooms and a studio, a digital lab, gallery space, an office and a classroom that will allow the development of educational programs. The Bakery Photography Collective sponsors an artist residency program in which photographers and artists from outside the immediate community are invited to use their facilities,

show and discuss their work, and join in the collective work environment.

Independent filmmakers are more oriented to New York City, often because of the availability of production equipment and resources. Filmmaker Lance Edmunds says, "I love to shoot in Maine—the cops help direct traffic! But I can't rent the equipment I need locally." Six film festivals (International, Documentary, Human Rights, Silent, Jewish and Women/Girls) attract a growing audience to a large number of art film venues. The Film Commission has been successful in enticing major studios to shoot films in Maine; this is likely to increase with the new incentives passed by the legislature.

Established discipline-based, statewide service organizations play important roles in communication, professional development, advocacy and networking for their constituents. The Maine Arts Commission views them as important partners. Some of these service organizations include Maine Writers and Publishers, The Union of Maine Visual Artists, Maine Fiberarts, Maine Crafts Association, Very Special Arts of Maine, Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance and Maine Alliance for Arts Education. (Short thumbnails of these key organizations are in Appendix B, but other smaller organizations exist as well.)

Some networks and service organizations are struggling or nonexistent.

Disciplines not served by established networks or service organizations are at a disadvantage. A loose informal network of choreographers finds steady employment in university settings or commercial dance studios, but there is no similar network for theatre artists or organizations. One participant explains, "Portland is over-served with theatres," citing a large number of semi- and professional theatre companies in addition to Portland Stage Company, the state's flagship Equity theatre. The high degree of competition for limited audience and limited dollars may disincline theatre directors and managers from the time-consuming tasks of networking and building collaborations.

Despite the strong presence of storytelling, puppetry and new vaudeville in Maine, there was little evidence that artists in these disciplines are connecting with one

another, at least within Maine. Many of them, while Maine-based, find their livelihoods touring outside of the state. Further research might yield more nuanced information: Of the 75 people identified for focus groups and interviews, only four were theatre-based, two were in music and one was in dance, and only three were presenters of the performing arts.

Maine Presenters and Artists Network (MEPAN), formerly Maine Art Sponsors and Artists, is just emerging from a dormant period. A small conference was convened in spring 2006 with MAC support, and there is leadership (and state funding) to begin planning a 2007 conference and to develop strategies to rebuild the program and membership. MAC's director Alden Wilson is "committed to refocusing attention on the performing arts."

A NOTE ON INNOVATION

In 1826, the Maine Charitable Mechanics' Association mounted its first exhibition for arts, crafts and new inventions. The state continues this commitment to fostering innovation in at least two organized ways: The Center for Law and Innovation at the University of Maine School of Law studies and teaches about the role of intellectual property law in economic development, and The Innovation Institute, a private endeavor now in its second year, invites a diverse cross-sector group to a weekend retreat.

What does innovation mean to artists in Maine today? Except to reject "trendy" as innovative, they are neither uncomfortable with the term nor fond of such labels. Around the state, conceptual work, performance art, cross-discipline investigations, and new media are developing alongside many traditional forms. Both inventiveness and tradition are valued, and many describe innovation as including elements of both: "New but rooted in place and or tradition." "Innovative using the traditional form." "To use tradition in a new way, not for the sake of newness alone, but in order to be truly expressive." "Introspective but not isolated."

Others define innovation in terms of connection. Collaborations between artists and scientists, especially related to the environment, are not uncommon. One artist speaks of valuing creativity around resources such as new financing models and partners. Others talk about innovation in terms of relating to place: "Homegrown, doing something differently, as in a twist on landscape." "I try to be open to what is happening and bring that into my art." Civic engagement is also mentioned in conjunction with innovation: "It's innovative to bring different cultural and regional voices to the stage."

Choreographer Buffy Miller offers that self-production in Maine is itself innovative: "With no money and no audience, 'anything goes.' It foments a lot of experimentation. But how do you get to the next level?"

Some participants suggest that there can be too much conformity around a style or genre that may have started as innovative. Referring to the new vaudeville tradition that blossomed in Maine through the leadership of Tony Montanaro

and Benny Reehl, a dancer says, "In Maine, it would be innovative for performing artists not to do new vaudeville." And a writer adds, "For poetry, innovation would be to return to meter."

Traditional arts, such as Acadian music, ballad singing, basketmaking and other crafts, are important in Maine, but none of the participants cite specific experimentation within these forms, though several note that musicians are borrowing freely from a number of musical traditions and that the music is constantly evolving. Craft traditions are very strong in Maine, particularly fiber and furniture, and innovation is constantly present. Fiber artist Katharine Cobey knitted a 30-foot boat and was invited to show her work in Romania. The gallery at the Maine Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockland shows not only exquisite carpentry and design, but also the work of furniture-makers whose "furniture" is not functional, but exists as pure art.

Folk traditions are somewhat less open to innovation than other forms are, perhaps because, as music presenter Don Cyr explains, "Right now, we're aiming at preservation. When it gets strong, when we don't have to worry about losing it—that's when you get the diversity. You can't get innovation until you have a body of people who are doing it the old way." But craft practices evolve, too. Cyr speaks about innovation in the craft of snowshoe making: Native American masters are using different materials and shapes to meet today's needs.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Build on Maine's Creative Economy Initiative

The Creative Economy Council lays the groundwork for public and private investment in creative assets—including artists. It is timely to focus on individual artists' contributions to the creative economy and to help position them as both assets and beneficiaries.

With the recent report of the Creative Economy Council, Maine's cultural assets are poised to see increased investment. It is important to ensure that artists and cultural leaders are valued and "at the table," where they can make proposals and find partners and resources. In some cases, this means actively encouraging artists as business people to take full advantage of the opportunities to develop their careers, grow their businesses and create jobs. It may also mean assuring that artists are consulted when investment decisions are made.

Maine's communities have used a wide variety of approaches and strategies to develop their creative economies. It would be helpful to artists, business and civic leaders to begin to document these various models and to track results so that they can be readily articulated and shared with others.

Success in developing Maine's creative economy will almost certainly lead to gentrification, which can in turn threaten artists and cultural institutions. This cycle has already taken its toll in Portland and soon will be a reality in other communities. MAC can play a leadership role in addressing gentrification before it negates the progress being made in arts development. Additional and improved cultural facilities could be another result of successful cultural development. Older institutions are already struggling with necessary renovations and repairs. Planning should begin now to address current and future capital needs, perhaps building on MAC's New Century Community model.

Provide Time and Space for Creation

Maine is blessed with outstanding artist communities, in particular Haystack and Skowhegan, which are dedicated to providing time and space to create. When the Surdna Foundation surveyed how art teachers across the country had used their fellowships, a number of them reported using their funds to attend an artist residency in Maine.

When asked what would make the biggest difference in their creative lives, artist after artist responds, "Time and space." Stuart Kestenbaum, director of Haystack, says, "We [Haystack in particular, but residency centers in general] have the ability to create a deeper support network . . . We can be nimble and adjust programs and resources to serve artists." In general, residency programs have the capacity for and the interest in playing an extended role, especially during the off season.

Many people reference Mass MoCA as a model for creating critical mass through the adaptive reuse of an old mill building, with major exhibition venues and numerous smaller self-directed spaces. They see the possibility of replication in Maine, with its plethora of abandoned mills, preserving the legacy of the state's early manufacturing history. Sharon Corwin, curator at Colby College, dreams of a one-year curatorial fellowship in an alternative space, "mentoring the burgeoning curatorial activity." Former curator Henry Barendse adds his idea of pairing an artist and a curator in an abandoned building for a year.

Advance Critical Discourse and Documentation

Regardless of discipline, artists from all across the state cite the lack of critical discourse as a major shortcoming in Maine's cultural ecology. Informed and articulate writers are perceived to be scarce in print journalism; even the public broadcasting system lacks consistent coverage. Often newspapers and magazines merely reprint press releases as sent by the artist. While visual and literary artists turn to their peers for critical feedback, they yearn for the validation that public media can provide.

The development of a critical discourse would be a "rising tide that would lift all boats, not just a few grantees." Artists see a connection between criticism, the

expansion of awareness about art in general, and the ability to foster new collectors, patrons and audiences.

Maine journalists like Robert Keyes and others have attended the National Endowment for the Arts' National Arts Journalism Institute. Maine could be a rich site for a fourth Institute, especially for writers covering the contemporary visual arts. Carl Little, director of marketing and communications at the Maine Community Foundation, previously served as an associate editor and continues to write for Art in America. He is very invested in working to improve this arena of arts support. Poet and professor Lee Sharkey suggests that the university system, with its various writing programs, could address this area of critical need.

According to a recent survey by Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, the single most requested service from writers is critical commentary. In response, MWPA is launching a new program called Maine Mentor Exchange, featuring a list of 25 professional writers who are willing to mentor new and emerging talent. For a reasonable fee, each mentor will provide thoughtful commentary on a manuscript in progress, including one face-to-face meeting.

Closely connected with the need for good critical writing is the need for good documentation. Visual artists in particular lament the lack of catalogs or other print documentation. The connection between documentation and increased exposure is clearly demonstrated with the experience of Sam van Aken, whose catalog from a Colby College installation led directly to an invitation to install a piece in Switzerland. Printed catalogs play a vital role for craft artists, too: Several lament the discontinuation of MAC's printed roster, which "used to sit in the teachers' lounges, and people would really look at it all year long. When it went on-line, it was the kiss of death."

Nurture a Network and Infrastructure for Performing Arts

Compared to the visual and literary arts, the performing arts environment is generally weaker, with less infrastructure, little networking and an audience

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characterized as conservative. Nat May of SPACE says, "As a presenter, it's hard to make a leap of faith. It's interesting work, but can I sell it? There's no margin of error." Another theatre director adds, "It's not unusual to do wonderful work for 5-10 people."

Affordable rehearsal and performance space is at a premium, especially in Portland, limiting the role of independent producers. Most artists have become producers of their own work, reflecting a national trend.

The recent closing of the Center for Cultural Exchange could have a significant negative impact on the presentation of culturally diverse contemporary performance. Although the building has been purchased by creative entrepreneurs and strong arts supporters who intend to keep it as a presenting venue, its future connection to Maine's diverse ethnic cultures remains unknown.

Some of the most highly regarded presenters, like the Bates Dance Festival, while presenting the world's outstanding dance companies, rarely feature the work of Maine choreographers. Portland Center for the Performing Arts, the city's major venue with five spaces, is home to 21 local companies, but non-resident groups (other than Broadway tours) are seldom booked. Amy Petrin, recently hired as the new director of PCPA Great Performances, will bring years of experience within the National Performance Network and an affinity for local artists. Another promising development is the reemergence of the Maine Performing Arts Network (MEPAN).

Timely attention to nurturing networks and recognizing excellence would help build the infrastructure for the performing arts to parallel the visual arts infrastructure that has grown organically and synergistically. MAC has invested in capacity building for many facility-based arts centers, and there are numerous venues in smaller communities, many of which are part of downtown revitalization. One opportunity is to connect these community arts agencies in ways that would support performing artists, by providing places to teach, rehearse, develop new work and perform in a statewide touring network.

Artists, particularly dancers and theatre artists, cite the desire for cross-exposure for their ongoing artistic development. Theatre artist Odelle Bowman speaks of a workshop with guest artist Celeste Miller as “the most exciting artistic thing in 5-10 years.” Others agree with the desire to “work with well-established artists on their own process, working cross-discipline. It’s a great way to jump-start your work, create community and get re-inspired.” Performing artists often don’t get exposure to new work because of the relatively small number of presenters in the state.

Building the performing arts infrastructure may also mean convening the key elements, investing in MEPAN and connecting the performing arts departments (theater, dance and music) at universities. The challenge will be to create a framework that is holistic and does not perpetuate an artist-presenter dichotomy. In order to better bolster the performing arts sector, MAC will need to expand its knowledge and depth of this discipline, to match the staff’s considerable rapport with and understanding of visual, public and literary art.

Create a More Robust Market for Visual Arts

The *supply* of exciting visual art is quite deep, but there is much work to be done to stimulate the *demand* side, to build audiences and active patronage. Most visual artists cite the lack of a consistent marketplace as a serious obstacle: “There’s a disconnect between appreciation of art and support of the artist.” Christine Macchi, executive director of Maine Fiberarts, explains, “Sales don’t reflect the quantity or the quality of the work being created here.” While she is speaking of fiber artists in particular, this seems to be true for visual artists of all kinds. “The audience who is interested in contemporary art is ultra-discerning with their disposable income,” says Nat May of SPACE.

Many of Maine’s 200+ galleries are seasonal, and artists report, “It’s hard to get attention in the summer, even in the art world. Everything happens at once.” Visual artists have become adept at finding markets for their work outside of Maine, particularly in Boston and New York.

Given the relative lack of discretionary funds in the majority of the population, this condition is unlikely to change. At the same time, creating a more robust market within Maine is frequently cited as one of the most critical paths to increased stability for visual artists, in addition to growing the market outside of the state.

Broaden the Concept of Cultural Tourism

In general, the Maine Tourism Commission touts the state's recreational and natural attractions, with little acknowledgement of the potential arts interests of summer visitors. Arts leaders have conferred with the tourism commission, but have not yet seen desired results. One success is the Maine Art Museum Trail, which emphasizes land and seascapes as artistic inspirations and connects seven of the major art museums. Yet the Trail does not include the two major contemporary galleries, Institute for Contemporary Art in Portland and the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport, because they are not collecting institutions. Maine Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has produced seven half-hour programs on the Museum Trail, but little notice is given to the contemporary artist. The recent marketing grant for Maine film festivals is a positive step, but there may be other opportunities to market Maine as a destination for the culturally inclined, perhaps capitalizing on the free summer lectures at artist communities like Skowhegan.

Encourage and Support Ongoing Professional and Artistic Development

Business Development

Participants often mention attending workshops and seminars in entrepreneurial and business practices, and very few mention business planning as a current need. There has been a steady stream of business workshops for artists, through MAC, MWPA, the Crafts Association, Fiberarts and others. Many artists have learned their lessons: Painters have found galleries elsewhere (Boston, New York), since the Maine market is meager. A performer who found business resources and mentors at the local college is renting

rehearsal space at the local town hall for \$5 an hour, keeping regular business hours.

Some artists express a need for technology assistance, and MAC does provide funds for business-related activities through its Good Idea grants. While many artists create their own websites, others, like sound artist Kris Hall, say, "If I try to do it all, I won't do it well."

Mentoring and Artistic Development

Mentoring is a common theme, and the artist residencies in particular are a hotbed of mentoring practices. "There can be a ceiling on your aspirations when you only know so much. I want someone to counsel me beyond my horizon," said Kris Hall while in residence at Skowhegan.

Artists frame a desire to "be in relationship with each other" and imagine an administrative body that would facilitate their proximity to one other. One artist mentions Location One in New York City, with its guest studios, as a place to work with local (NY) artists and germinate ideas.

Christine Macchi of Maine Fiberarts interviewed a dozen artists (not all fiber artists) prior to her interview and reported their keen interest in more workshops on art *making*: "We want to be better artists. We already have people helping us be better business people." Several artists suggest a fund for professional development that would underwrite master classes and workshops (both tuition and travel), and cite a desire for mentoring relationships and peer-to-peer exchange. A survey among Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance's members revealed that the biggest need was space for people to meet.

A Broader Range of Grants

Maine follows the national trend of a lack of mid-sized grants to artists ("mid-sized" being a relative term). There is a significant gap between the \$1,000 Good Idea grants and the few \$13,000 Fellowships. (The Artists in Maine Communities awards of \$7,500 are for partnership activities, with the funds going to organizations and not directly to artists.) Writer Maureen Stanton, who won a MAC Fellowship, first received one of the Commission's now-discontinued \$3,000 grants. "It served as an imprimatur,"

she says, "leveraging other grants." Although grateful for the larger amount, she laments the elimination of the smaller seed money, "a lost opportunity for many emerging artists." Several participants point out that a little money can go a long way, especially in Maine. Some suggest that MAC "gets it right" with their Good Idea grants and Fellowships and wonder if new funds could be used to increase the number of artists served through those programs, in particular focusing on artistic advancement and development of new work.

Bridge Divisions: Cultural, Geographic and Discipline

As previously noted, artists in the north and west of Maine are hampered by the distance to cultural centers. Reaching out to these artists and understanding the unique conditions of rural artists in general will be a challenge. MAC staff members travel to the farthest and most sparsely populated reaches of Maine at least once a year to conduct daylong workshops through the artME program, but they naturally invest more resources in areas of higher population density. Governor Baldacci cites technology as crucial to Maine's cultural infrastructure, and technology would address some of the service delivery challenges of the most remote areas. (Fortunately Maine is reported to have the highest per capita use of personal computers in the country.) Another opportunity is the idea of intra-state artistic exchanges within Maine's sub-regions and between the coastal region and artists further to the north and west.

Other divisions pose challenges, as well. The future of the Center for Cultural Exchange in Portland is uncertain. This was one of the very few organizations noted for its work to investigate, validate and bring the cultural expressions of Maine's immigrant communities and people of color to the public. Despite the ongoing work of folklorists with the Discovery Research program and MAC's long-standing commitment to Native American cultural traditions, it's not clear to what degree MAC or other agencies reach or communicate with artists from culturally diverse groups.

MAINE - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Finally, there are discipline divisions as well. MAC's Community and Traditional Arts Committees advise, "Artist networks have been built within communities, now it's time to build networks between communities (of artists)."

CONSIDERATIONS

The work of the Creative Economy Council presents a timely opportunity. As stated elsewhere, the multi-layered and intense investigation into the creative economy and the Creative Economy Council's 2006 report present an unusually ripe opportunity. "The creative economy has strongly resonated with both artists and economic developers. Clearly the value of the creative economy is playing out in communities from Fort Kent to Portland and Rumford to Rockland, with growing local support from both public and private resources," says John Rohman, chair of both the Maine Arts Commission and the Creative Economy Council.

Sustainability is a major issue. Several interviewees warn about the potential negative impact of any new program that might exist for two or three years, and then disappear (either by design or by neglect). Nearly every MAC committee who contributed to this report emphasized the need to think about sustainability up front. The challenge is to envision a program that becomes integral to the state and to identify resources to support it over time.

A broad approach could identify and build a larger cohort of originating artists, providing them with time and places to work, professional artistic development and increased critical discourse. Stuart Kestenbaum from Haystack maintains that while temporary, project-based support can be desirable, "You can get a grant but still not feel supported." A statewide initiative, perhaps using Haystack and the state's other residency programs, could provide time, space and connections that would benefit Maine for the long-term.

Administrative partners are available and willing, with several organizations expressing interest. Carl Little of the Maine Community Foundation envisions MCF managing the funds and MAC administering the program with Creative Capital support. Both the CMCA and MECA express interest and are frequently mentioned by artists as good homes for expanded artist services, or at least as critical allies in program design. The state's service organizations will also be valuable partners in outreach and promotion. In nearly every focus group, the vast majority of participants agree that the Maine Arts Commission is a trusted entity, but

they urge that artists (not necessarily from Maine) make the artistic decisions, and that bureaucracy remain low.

Concerns about exposure to public criticism are balanced by the inclusion of a freedom-of-expression clause in MAC's by-laws. The Skowhegan structure described by director Linda Earle might be a good organizational model: A governance board manages the finances and institutional development, and an artist board selects faculty and students and plans programming.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the artists and cultural workers of Maine for the extraordinary opportunity to explore their great state through the eyes of its creative people. From Portland to Rockport to Skowhegan, we met wonderful, generous people who were willing to be direct and honest in their critique as well as expansive and imaginative in their dreaming.

We left Maine with a deep appreciation of the mix of traditional and contemporary artistic exploration, impressed by the connections between artists and by their commitments to each other. We hope that we have captured some of Maine's strengths and opportunities in this report and also hope that our observations are received as respectful suggestions.

We are particularly grateful to Donna McNeil, who not only was our tireless host and tour guide, but also worked hard to send us advance materials, direct us to websites, prepare a list of people to interview and help us understand the breadth, depth and incredible texture of Maine's creative life.

We also express our genuine thanks to Nat May, who hosted us at SPACE for three focus groups; to Katarina Weslien, who spent an afternoon touring with us through some of Portland's artist spaces; to the staff of the Center for Maine Contemporary Arts, who not only hosted the Commission's meeting but also attended a small but intensely useful focus group; and to Linda Earle, who allowed us to feel a part of the Skowhegan experience by inviting us to the weekly master artist lecture, providing a bed in a historic home, offering access to their amazing library and sharing a delicious meal by the lake alongside Skowhegan faculty and students. We left Maine with a glimpse of the magic that called to artists hundreds of years ago and calls to them today.

Finally, we thank Celia O'Donnell of Creative Capital, whose laser-like observations and thoughtful questions helped us to go deeper and think harder.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Interviews

Ashley Bryan, artist, illustrator, Islesford
Amy Stacey Curtis, installation artist, Gray (also attended focus group)
Don Cyr, founder of L'Association Culturelle & Historique, ME Acadian Culture Project, Lille (also attended MAC meeting)
Linda Earle, artistic director of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan
Lance Edmunds, filmmaker, Kennebunk and Brooklyn NY
Laura Faure, director, Bates Dance Festival, Lewiston (also attended focus group)
Kehben Grier, the Beehive Collective, Machais
David Greenham, director, Theatre at Monmouth; Maine Presenters Network, Monmouth (also attended MAC meeting)
Marian Godfrey, Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia PA
Sheila Jans, independent consultant and curator, Madawaska
Stuart Kestenbaum, director, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle (also attended MAC meeting)
Katy Kline, director, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick (also attended MAC meeting)
Mike Levine, Acorn Productions, Portland
Carl Little, director of communications, Maine Community Foundation, Ellsworth
Christine Macchi, Maine Fiberarts, Topsham
Barak Olins, artist, professor at MECA, Portland
Joanna Reese, writer, Norway
John Rohman, chair, Creative Economy Council, Bangor
Owen Smith, professor of new media, University of Maine/Orono
Maureen Stanton, writer of creative non-fiction, Georgetown
Sam van Aken, installation artist; sculpture instructor at University of Maine, Portland (also attended focus group)
Katarina Weslien, director of MFA program at MECA; co-owner of Bakery Studios, Portland (also attended focus group)

Focus Groups

Henry Barendse, curator, Northeast Harbor
Mark Bessire, director, Bates College of Art, Lewiston
Odelle Bowman, A Company of Girls, Portland
Bruce Brown, curator, Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport
Sharon Corwin, curator of contemporary art, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville

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Lauren Fensterstock, sculptor, former curator, professor of metalsmithing at MECA, Portland
Alison Ferris, curator at Bowdoin College
Annie Finch, Stonecoast Low-Residency MFA Program, Portland
Keith Fitzgerald, curator/owner of Zero Station, Portland
Louis Gervais, dancer/choreographer, Portland
Kris Hall, sound artist; instructor at University of Southern Maine, Portland
Meredith Hall, writer, professor of creative writing, Pownal
Tim Harbeson, puppeteer, musician, Portland
Anna Hepler, Bowdoin instructor of print-making; director of The MAP Room, Portland
Shonna Humphrey, executive director of Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, Bath
Derek Jackson, experimental theatre, curator, Portland
Iain Kerr, member *spurse* artist collective, professor at MECA MFA program, Portland
Nat May, director SPACE; founding member of Photography Collective, Portland
Suzette McAvoy, curator of contemporary art, Farnsworth Museum of Art, Rockland
Nancy Manter, painter; organizer of *LandEscapes*, Mt. Desert Isle
Cathy Melio, education director for Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport
Buffy Miller, dancer, Portland
Greg Parker, painter, Westbrook
Susan Poulin, solo performer/writer, South Berwick
Abby Shahn, painter, Solon
Shamou, musician, composer, Portland
Chriss Sutherland, musician/Cerberus Shoal, Portland
Shoshannah White, photographer, Portland
Oliver Wilder, President and CEO, Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport

Maine Arts Commission

Commission Members

Rich Abramson, Superintendent of Schools, MAC Arts Education Committee, Readfield
Rebecca Conrad, writer, small business owner, Auburn
Donald Cyr, Lille-sur-St-Jean (also interviewed)
Hugh French, Tides Institute, Eastport
Lee Griswold, realtor; community theatre/chorus, Auburn
Victoria Hershey, journalist, writer; Institute for Practical Democracy, Portland
Noah Keteyian, director of Midcoast Magnet, Rockland

Katy Kline, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick (also interviewed)

Jeffrey McKeen, folklorist, Montville

Stuart Nudelman, Ogunquit Performing Arts Center, Ogunquit

Mark C. Scally, choral teacher, East Millinocket

Lee Sharkey, poet; editor of Beloit Poetry Review, Vienna

Donald Sharland, social worker/elder care, Saco

Lynn Thompson, Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, Newcastle

Jessica Tomlinson, Maine College of Art, Portland

Rebecca Welsh, River Valley Arts Council, Rumford

Committee members in attendance on June 16, 2006

Mark Bessire (also attended focus group)

Alan Crichton, sculptor, Liberty

Robert Diamante, photographer, Portland

David Greenham (also interviewed)

Stuart Kestenbaum (also interviewed)

Christine Macchi (also interviewed)

Michael Shaugnessy, chair of art department, University of Southern Maine, Gorham

Caitlin Shetterly, Winter Harbor Theatre, Portland

Owen Smith (also interviewed)

Lora Urbanelli, director of the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland

APPENDIX B: CONSULTANT TEAM

Kathie deNobriga was a founding member of Alternate ROOTS, a service organization for community-based artists in the South, and served as ROOTS' executive director and planning/development director for ten years. During that time she co-edited an anthology of new plays from the southern theatre and initiated a consortium to create the Community Arts Training Directory, now available through www.communityarts.net. She is now an independent consultant for the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation and numerous grass-roots arts organizations, state arts agencies in South Carolina and Georgia, and other foundations interested in building organizational capacity. She also serves as a site evaluator for national arts funders. DeNobriga is a Fellow in the Rockefeller Foundation's Next Generation Leadership program. She is also a member of the City Council of Pine Lake, Georgia.

Barbara Schaffer Bacon co-directs Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts that fosters civic engagement through arts and culture. Barbara has worked as a consultant since 1990 and prior to that served as executive director of the Arts Extension Service at the University of Massachusetts. Her work includes program design and evaluation for state and local arts agencies and private foundations nationally. Barbara has written, edited, and contributed to several publications including *Civic Dialogue*, *Arts & Culture: Findings from Animating Democracy*; *Case Studies from Animating Democracy*; *Animating Democracy: The Artistic Imagination as a Force in Civic Dialogue*; *Fundamentals of Local Arts Management* and *The Cultural Planning Work Kit*. An arts management educator, she has served as a primary instructor for the *Fundamentals* and *Advanced Arts Management* seminars.

Barbara is a board member of the Fund for Women Artists and an advisor to the New WORLD Theater. She serves as president of the Arts Extension Institute, Inc., and chairs her local school committee.